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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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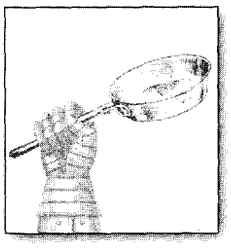

Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 30.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Giving a damn about Social Security, Bayonne wants Cooper &c.

6 **JEFFREY ROSEN** TRB: SHELL GAME A Clinton betrayal on habeas corpus.

7 **THE EDITORS** MISGUIDED The story behind Israel's missile attack.

8 **THE EDITORS** BETTER LATE THAN NEVER Clinton's brave abortion veto.

9 **NOTEBOOK** Farrakhan's man at Harvard, Tswana on the Internet &c.

10 **JACOB HEILBRUNN** THE PRESS: BAD TRIP The *Times* strolls down memory lane.

11 **HANNA ROSIN** WORKING GIRLS Can women's anger re-elect Bill Clinton?

12 **CHARLES LANE** NATIONAL INSECURITY: DUES AND DON'TS What we owe the U.N.

14 **STEPHEN GLASS** PHILADELPHIA STORY Meet Mayor Ed Rendell, master of hype.

16 **PETER BEINART** BORN IN THE USA Why has America let Liberia fall apart?

20 **MATTHEW MILLER** GROW UP It's become chic for liberals to claim that the U.S. economy can grow much faster than the Fed allows. Dream on.

23 **MICHAEL LEWIS** CAMPAIGN JOURNAL: SURROGATES The story of a Dole confidante and a Clinton aide who were enemies in Vietnam and made up in Washington.

28 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: SPRING ROUNDUP Zeffirelli directs a dull *Jane Eyre*; Shirley MacLaine livens up *Mrs. Winterbourne*; *The Last Supper* is simply loathsome.

30 **MARGARET TALBOT** LES TRÈS RICHES HEURES DE MARTHA STEWART Money, time, and the surrender of American taste.

35 **CASS R. SUNSTEIN** EARL WARREN IS DEAD *Freedom's Law* by Ronald Dworkin

39 **PETER GALISON** MR. COGITO *Descartes: An Intellectual Biography* by Stephen Gaukroger

42 **EAMON GRENNAN** POEM *Summer Evening*

46 **MATTHEW COOPER** WASHINGTON DIARIST: SCARY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Anti-social

To the editors:

Unfortunately, much of what Matthew Miller has to say ("Uh-Oh," April 15) is true for the future of Social Security unless steps are taken to change things. He loses me, though, when he forecasts "fallout when it dawns on the 80 million voters under 40 that they'd be better off investing their payroll taxes for their retirement themselves...." I've got news for you, Matthew. Many of us who will never see 40 again would have preferred to have invested our payroll taxes ourselves.

For example, I only paid into Social Security for thirty-five years, and if I start collecting as I plan to at age 62, I will get around $835 per month. If I had been allowed to invest my payroll taxes instead and had only been able to average 6 percent a year I could draw out $835 a month until age 76. At 7 percent it would last until I was 87. At 8 percent it would last forever, and I could pay myself $971. All this with no matching funds from my employer. Obviously this picture would be even brighter for someone who paid in ten to fifteen years longer than I.

I hope this clears up the misconception that we pre-boomers are the recipients of an unearned windfall. The myth that we will draw out much more than we put in ignores the time value of money invested over a long period.

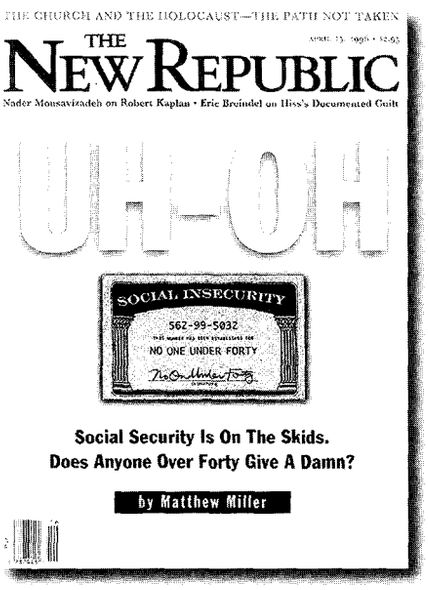
ROBIN S. PURDIE
Cameron Park, California

To the editors:

By labeling Social Security and Medicare taxes as the twenty-first-century "tax holocaust" Matthew Miller makes a substantial contribution to the "tactical demagoguery" he warns readers about. Many of the claims in his piece on Social Security are either wrong or misleading.

Miller claims the forecasts of the Social Security commissioner are "rosier than anything the economy has experienced over the last twenty years." The assumptions in the 1995 Social Security Trustees' report's "intermediate" scenario (the standard basis for policy projections) show an average real GDP growth rate of 2 percent for the next ten years. This falls to about 1.8 percent in the following ten years and continues downward to 1.2 percent for the last twenty years of Social Security's seventy-five-year planning horizon. By comparison, GDP growth averaged 2.8 percent over the last twenty years. In fact, the projections in the trustees' report assume far weaker growth than the U.S. has ever experienced for any prolonged period.

Miller claims that Social Security is not progressive, even though lower-income wage earners get a far higher return on their Social Security taxes than high-income wage earners, because the latter get more back in benefits than lower-income earners. Perhaps a definition of "progressive" is in order here. Under the current system, a lower-income worker pays roughly $1,000 per year in Social Security taxes (combining employer and employee contributions). This worker would get roughly $6,500 per year in Social Security benefits upon retirement. A worker earning near the maximum wage subject to the Social Security tax pays $7,650 per year in taxes. This worker will receive approximately $17,800 per


THE CHURCH AND THE HOLOCAUST—THE PATH NOT TAKEN
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Nader Mousavizadeh on Robert Kaplan • Eric Breindel on Hiss's Documented Guilt
UH-OH
SOCIAL INSECURITY
562-99-5032
NO ONE UNDER FORTY
Social Security Is On The Skids.
Does Anyone Over Forty Give A Damn?
by Matthew Miller

year in benefits upon retirement. This arrangement provides the lower-income workers with roughly an annual benefit that is about 6.5 times their annual contribution. The benefit the higher-income worker receives is less than 2.5 times the size of his or her annual contribution.

DEAN BAKER
Washington, D.C.

Matthew Miller replies:

On "rosy" projections: the trustees' report assumes that future productivity growth will be significantly higher than what we've experienced the last twenty years. Productivity growth is the key assumption in assessing the credibility of the forecast. GDP growth is actually derived from it, as well as from labor force growth, the slowing of which (due to demography) accounts for the misleading "conservatism" Baker alleges. On progressivity, I explained in the piece that lower-income beneficiaries get a higher share of their former wages. But the fact that today's upper-income beneficiaries receive the largest absolute windfalls is relevant in considering whether they can be fairly asked to give something up as part of reform.

Wicked Ales

To the editors:

In "Hiss's Guilt" (April 15), Eric Breindel contends that the March 30, 1945, cable from one Anatoli Gromov, the "KGB resident" in Washington at the time, to Moscow concerning a Russian spy code-named "Ales," whom the National Security Agency announced on March 6, 1996, was "probably Alger Hiss," "proves Hiss's role as a Soviet agent" and that he continued in that capacity throughout World War II, long after Whittaker Chambers broke with Communism in 1938.

Before one accepts Breindel's conclusions, several issues warrant careful consideration. First, if Hiss was collaborating with the Russians as alleged, why would he, as their most important and highly placed operative in the American government, be assigned a cover name like "Ales," which is much more an acronym than a cryptonym and quite transparent?

Second, after his defection, Chambers claimed to have paid a special visit to Hiss in late 1938 to persuade him to take similar steps, which Hiss adamantly refused to do. During that same period, Chambers also spoke with Harry Dexter White and others, whom he much later accused of having spied for the Russians, warning them to give up such practices or he would denounce them immediately. If Chambers is to be believed, why would Hiss persist in providing the Russians with classified State Department documents, knowing that the risks would be extraordinarily steep since he had no way of being sure whether Chambers had already given his name to American authorities or would do so if there were any indication Hiss was still engaged in espionage?

Third, Breindel attempts to cite Thomas Powers, the "intelligence historian," as independent corroboration of Hiss being "Ales" but does so without mentioning that a CIA counterintelligence person gave Powers this information before August 1989, when Powers wrote about it in *The New York Review of Books.*

Finally, Breindel tries to trivialize a statement favorable to Hiss made in 1992 by Dmitri Volkogonov, a well-respected Russian historian, who said, after a personal search of pertinent KGB records, that he came across no evidence that Hiss was a Russian agent. Acknowledging that he had not looked at any GRU files, he emphasized that if Hiss were culpable he would have found proof of such in the

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materials he examined. With certain people, like Powers, who feel Hiss is guilty now, assuming that completely decoded versions of all essential cable traffic from the '40s will eventually be found in the respective Soviet intelligence archives, it is unfortunate that the NSA did not release the above cable while Volkogonov, who died last December, was still available to comment on whether this particular item was among those he had checked previously.

JAMES W. HAMILTON
Albuquerque, New Mexico

To the editors:

In my recent article "Goronwy—and Others," in *Partisan Review* (Winter 1996), I mentioned that in the brief period in the early '30s in which Goronwy Rees was in the service of the Soviet Union, his code name was "Gross." In his piece on the Venona files in your magazine, Eric Breindel tells us that the code name of Alger Hiss in his secret dealings with the Soviet Union was "Ales."

I think it is worth noting that in both instances these code names were arrived at by connecting the first letters (or sound) of the first name to the last letters (or sound) of the last name: "Gross" for Goronwy Rees, "Ales" for Alger Hiss.

DIANA TRILLING
New York, New York

Glass houses

To the editors:

Stephen Glass's "Do As They Do" piece (April 15) argues that Congress is full of hypocrites who voted to apply the Fair Labor Standards Act to themselves but are now struggling with the law and seizing on loopholes to avoid it. This is not only an erroneous argument, but one that Glass supports with seriously flawed facts.

Glass asserts that Congress is skirting the law by exempting 60 percent of its staff, but he cites no comparative data nor quotes any experts to demonstrate why this figure should be considered high. He focuses his reporting on a tiny 3 percent minority of representatives who, in applying the law to their offices, have determined that none of their staff is eligible for overtime. However, he omits comprehensive data showing that almost all representatives have classified some staff as overtime-eligible. The article claims that members are ignoring an internal study suggesting that nearly every employee be made eligible for overtime. But the study merely says that members should "begin with the presumption that all employees are eligible," just as private-sector employers do.

The article contends that members' evasion of the law "has ignited a record number of complaints." But, to support this statement, Glass lists only the number of information requests to the Compliance Office and never reports how many of these were actually complaints.

Glass criticizes Congress for seeking "advisory opinions" from the Compliance Office. He describes this "as a privilege that private businesses can't get from the courts" but fails to mention that private businesses can and do get advisory opinions from the Labor Department.

Finally, Glass attributes to the Congressional Management Foundation the statement that caseworkers work an average of fifty-two hours weekly. But we've never compiled caseworker-hour data.

Congress is far from perfect. But, in this case, the criticism of the institution is unfounded and unprofessionally reported.

CRAIG SCHULTZ
Research director,
Congressional Management Foundation
Washington, D.C.

The Bayonne plan

To the editors:

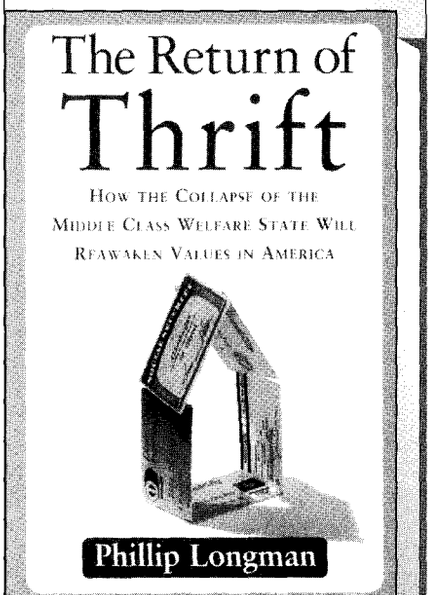
Poor Matthew Cooper! I was most distressed to read that the White House has failed to woo him ("Sucking Up," April 15). Under the Republican congressional policy of decentralization, perhaps this responsibility now falls to the states and localities. In my capacity as a municipal public information officer, I act as press secretary for Bayonne, New Jersey. We would be happy to woo him.

The woo package includes the following: (1) An exclusive interview with Mayor Leonard P. Kiczek, a centrist Democrat. To remind Matt of the non-wooing centrist Democrat in the White House, he can look at a photo of the mayor with Bill Clinton. (2) An overnight stay in Bayonne, the native town of the following Washington types: Congressman Barney Frank; his sister, Ann Lewis, a top Clinton campaign official; Laura D'Andrea Tyson, Clinton's chief economist; and (for bipartisan balance) the late Arthur Burns, a former Federal Reserve chairman. With the obvious exception of Burns, maybe the group will woo Cooper after they read about his visit here. (3) Exclusive access to any press release he wants. How about the one on Building Code Safety Week?

After the Bayonne visit, perhaps Matt should go home to [South] Orange and absorb some more woos and views from here in the provinces. After his New Jersey sojourn, Matt will be assured of his personal worth. Thus refreshed, he can return to Washington.

JOSEPH E. RYAN
Bayonne, New Jersey

"An unstinting look at the culture of middle-class entitlements and their implications for the 21st century."*


The Return of
Thrift
How the Collapse of the Middle Class Welfare State Will Reawaken Values in America
Phillip Longman

"An unsparing and unnerving audit of the cost of so-called entitlements which makes the debate on balancing the federal budget appear all but irrelevant." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Some of the most lucid writing ever on national macroeconomics." —*Booklist*

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*SENATOR BILL BRADLEY

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FROM WASHINGTON

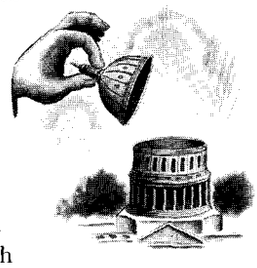
Shell game

"I weep for you," the Walrus said:
"I deeply sympathize."
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

"He's very upset," says a senior administration official of President Clinton's decision to sign the "Effective Death Penalty and Public Safety Act of 1996." "It breaks his heart." On the one hand, Clinton was reluctant to go down in history as the president who signed the first statutory limitations on habeas corpus since Magna Carta; on the other hand, there was Oklahoma City. So, like Lewis Carroll's Walrus, who snuffled over the fate of the oysters even as he devoured every one, Clinton this week weepily girded himself for the signing ceremony. But never mind the tears. The "Public Safety Act" is the nastiest piece of legislation that Clinton has signed during his first term, and his failure to veto it will be a permanent stain on his presidency.

To assuage their jittery consciences, Justice Department officials are suggesting that the real villain in the drama that led to the terrorism bill was the unlikely alliance between the ACLU and the NRA. Before Oklahoma City, the administration proposed a series of measures for expanding the FBI's power to fight international terrorism, including a good-faith exception for illegally conducted wiretaps and greater access to credit records. Waving the banner of Ruby Ridge, a coalition of liberal civil libertarians and conservative anti-federalists persuaded Representative Bob Barr of Georgia to sponsor an amendment removing the Clinton proposals. As soon as the amendment passed last March, the NRA withdrew its opposition to the terrorism bill, which sailed through the House and Senate with hardly any debate last week. "To me, the lesson is that an alliance between the radical right and the radical left serves the radical right," suggests a senior Justice Department official.

This narrative, however, omits two crucial protagonists: President Clinton and Senator Orrin Hatch. After the Oklahoma City bombing, Hatch saw a heaven-sent opportunity to enact the habeas corpus revolution that Republicans have been proposing for more than a decade. In an inspired bit of ambulance chasing, Hatch dragooned the parents of the Oklahoma bombing victims into endorsing his bill, even though none of them seemed to have a clue what "habeas corpus" meant. (One father confessed he thought it was a high-tech weapon for fighting terrorists.) Clinton, for his part, originally insisted in the wake of the bombing that habeas corpus reform had nothing to do with fighting terrorism. But last June, in one of the most egregious flip flops of his presidency, he announced on "Larry King Live" that habeas corpus reform "ought to be done in the context of this terrorism legislation." Two days later, the Senate obliged.



How radically will the "Public Safety Act" of 1996 change the law of habeas corpus as we know it? Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan was perhaps a little rash when he compared Clinton's capitulation on habeas corpus to Lincoln's suspension of the Great Writ during the Civil War. Even after the habeas corpus act of 1867, habeas corpus was a relatively thin guarantee that someone couldn't be incarcerated without a judicial hearing in a court of competent jurisdiction. After the Supreme Court's *Brown* v. *Allen* decision in 1953, however, habeas corpus was transformed into a mechanism by which federal courts can review the substantive and procedural merits of every conviction (or death penalty) handed down by state courts. The "Effective Death Penalty Act" will essentially return the law to its pre-1953 condition, requiring federal courts to defer to the legal and factual conclusions of state courts, unless the state court determination involved an "unreasonable application of clearly established federal law" or was based on an "unreasonable application of the facts."

This will have no impact at all on fighting terrorists (all of whom are prosecuted in federal rather than state courts in the first place) but will greatly increase the possibility that ordinary defendants can be convicted or executed after a state trial that has been tainted with constitutional or factual errors. Nevertheless, the Rehnquist Court, on its own initiative, has been chipping away at habeas corpus over the past decade; and the Clinton-Hatch bill represents more of a coup de grace for the Warren Court's conception of habeas corpus than a drastic departure from the status quo.

Another land mine buried in the "Public Safety Act" will transform federal-state relations almost as radically as the habeas corpus reforms. Section 702 of the bill federalizes thousands of "assaults with a dangerous weapon" previously punished exclusively under state law, with sentences of up to thirty-five years in a federal prison. At the eleventh hour, on April 15, the conference committee deleted a requirement that the conduct had to be politically motivated. As the law stands, therefore, the only limitation on what may be the most dramatic federalization of state criminal law in American history is a requirement of criminal "involvement transcending national boundaries." But this could be satisfied by nothing more than evidence that the defendant used drugs imported from Mexico.

Finally, there are the immigration provisions. Previously rejected by bipartisan consensus, and smuggled in at the last minute by the conference committee, these provisions would allow the government to deport aliens based on secret evidence; would require the government summarily to exclude aliens who have entered the United States without inspection; and would allow the government to exclude aliens merely on the basis of their membership in illicit organizations. Even the current Supreme Court may well strike down these textbook violations of due process and the First Amendment.

It's an irony, and not a very amusing one, that a Congress that pretends to be concerned about states' rights and a president who claims to be devoted to civil liberties have together passed the most illiberal and statist crime bill since the McCarthy era. It will radically expand federal criminal jurisdiction while radically restricting federal courts' ability to review violations of federal constitutional rights. "If you're going to gut the courts and gut the Bill of Rights, you just have a naked federal government that will fulfill the worst nightmares of people who claim they don't want the federal government running everything," says Senator Russell Feingold of Wisconsin, one of only eight senators who found the courage to vote against the bill.

Who deserves more of the blame for this disgraceful law, Clinton or Hatch? "I like the Walrus best," said Alice: "because you see he was a *little* sorry for the poor oysters." "He ate more than the Carpenter, though," said Tweedledee. Well, said Alice, "they were *both* very unpleasant characters."

JEFFREY ROSEN

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAY 13, 1996

MISGUIDED

Here are the facts: on April 18, Hezbollah fired two Katyusha rockets into Israel from a site located 300 meters from a United Nations camp in Lebanon. This was part of a vast ongoing operation that had forced hundreds of thousands of Israelis from their homes or into bomb shelters. It was not the first time this Muslim extremist militia had used the U.N. headquarters at Kana as cover. On April 14 and again on April 17, God's recruits had also aimed their rockets southwards. Fijian troops manning the U.N. compound had several times tried to get Hezbollah to cease their fire. It was, after all, endangering them. But the real tragedy at Kana was that, just before April 18 and unbeknownst to the Israelis, several hundred Lebanese refugees had sought haven at the base instead of joining their countrymen on the trek north. By the end of the day some seventy-five of them were dead, hit by Israeli artillery trying to silence the Katyushas.

The Israeli Defense Force's choice was whether to allow Hezbollah's firepower to go unanswered (leaving Israelis imperiled) or to take the firepower out. It was a choice, but one that no government anywhere would have decided against. Of course, civilized armies don't place their arsenals amid innocent men and women. But, as one Hezbollah leader, Mohammed Raad, told Beirut's *al Nahar* newspaper, the "civilian population constitutes our defensive belt."

The death of these innocents wrenches the heart. But there is something disgusting about the ritual of Lebanese national mourning transformed into a celebration of Hezbollah. After all, when Hezbollah and its ideological cousins kill civilians it is never a mistake. In Cairo last week eighteen Greek Orthodox tourists on pilgrimage to holy sites were murdered by Islamic gunmen. A tribune for the killers said they thought the Greeks were Jews. But Jewish life is no longer cheap. It is not taken without reprisal. That is one meaning of Zionism. It is because Hezbollah (and Hamas) think Jewish life cheap that they make Arab life cheap, too, by waging their wars from amid the very people for whom they purport to speak.

In its efforts to destroy Hezbollah's military capability, Israel has made refugees of 400,000 Lebanese. Shimon Peres was convinced that this wave of human misery would put pressure on the Lebanese government, which would in turn put pressure on Syria, which actually runs the country, to curb the Shi'a fanatics. This belief is one to which democratic governments like Israel's are prone: governments listen to their people, neighbors care about each other. It assumes that Hafez al-Assad cares about the suffering of the Lebanese. Peres persuaded himself of this because he saw the attack on Hezbollah as a means to force Assad into peace negotiations.

In fact, Assad has used Hezbollah's rocket attacks and the ensuing misery of the Lebanese for goals that have nothing to do with peace. One is to reassert, during a period of change in the region, his dominion over Lebanon. In a Freudian slip at the great reunion of veteran terrorists at the Palestine National Council in Gaza, Yasir Arafat spoke this week of the "government of Lebanon and its president Assad."

Assad's second goal is to re-establish his centrality in Arab politics. Previously marginalized by the exuberance about the Israel-PLO deal, Assad has been besieged by visiting interlopers these last days: the French foreign minister (nostalgic for empire), the Russian foreign minister (nostalgic for superpower status), the Italian foreign minister (nostalgic for nostalgia). Eight foreign ministers in all, plus Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. And, last but not least, on his eighteenth visit, hat in hand but his appointment canceled nonetheless, the American secretary of state.

Which brings us to the dictator's third purpose. He wants the Golan Heights, but he does not want peace, surely not real peace. Basically, that has always been his position. Under the new circumstances, he may now be willing to muzzle Hezbollah. But only in exchange for the Golan. That might bring some temporary respite to captive Lebanon, and deep satisfaction to him. It will not, however, bring peace to Israel.

If Syria wanted the Lebanese border quiet it could make it as still as its own. But it does not want it quiet, and that is because it does not suffer when it is noisy. For nearly a decade and a half, Syria has been immune from Israeli retaliation, with Lebanon taking the hits on the fiction that it has a sovereign government in Beirut. But, instead of aiming at Hezbollah's rockets nestled in the villages of Lebanon, Israel should have struck at the bases and heavy equipment of the 35,000 Syrian soldiers who enforce Assad's brutal order in this unhappy country. This would really have gotten Assad's attention and, since he fears a war with Israel, it would have been more successful and more just. •

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

In campaign terms, Bill Clinton's April 10 veto of a bill that would have banned one method of late-term abortion may well have been a mistake. Already, Bob Dole has denounced his rival for crossing "an ethical and legal line we must never cross." The nation's Catholic bishops and the Vatican itself have condemned the president in terms portentous enough to rattle the most independent-minded Catholic voter: it was a "shameful veto," said the Vatican, "that in practice is equivalent to an incredibly painful act of aggression against an innocent human life." And the procedure in question—known as "partial birth abortion" by its opponents and "intact dilation and evacuation" by the physicians who perform it—won't be easy to defend in a soundbite. Unlike the vast majority of abortions, which occur in the first trimester, intact D&Es take place after twenty weeks of gestation, when fetuses are presumed to feel more sensation and when they more closely resemble, in their shadowy ultrasound pictures, the babies they'll eventually become. Moreover, the procedure involves partly extracting the fetus, then collapsing the skull and aspirating the brain fluid to allow the intact fetus to pass through the birth canal more easily—an image that even abortion rights supporters find disturbing, perhaps repellent.

But for all this, Clinton's decision was the right one. Supporters of the bill thought they'd found the holy grail—the one abortion restriction that could unite right-to-lifers with the majority of Americans who support abortion rights but harbor some moral qualms. Keep describing a medical procedure that sounds gruesome enough, and you're halfway to legislating it out of existence. But visceral queasiness isn't an argument for moral queasiness. The irony is that these late-term abortions are in many ways the most morally defensible. That's not just because they're quite rare—only about 13,000 of the approximately 1.5 million abortions performed annually in the U.S. occur after twenty weeks of gestation, and a much smaller number of these are performed by the intact D&E method. More importantly, they are almost always a last resort, in cases where catastrophic fetal abnormalities have been discovered late in pregnancy or when continuing the pregnancy would pose a grave threat to the life or health of the mother. These are, overwhelmingly, interventions in wanted pregnancies that have gone tragically awry. Vikki Stella, one of the women who spoke at Clinton's veto press conference, told of discovering that her unborn son's cranium contained no brain tissue. "I didn't make the decision for my child to die," she said. "God made the decision for my child to die. I had to make the decision to take him off life support."

Gruesome these procedures may be, but no more so than the circumstances—like Vikki Stella's—that most often give rise to them. And, in one important sense, intact D&Es are the lesser of several evils: they are substantially safer for the mother than the other leading methods of late-term abortion, which the bill did not seek to ban.

Still, though abortion rights advocates such as Pat Schroeder (who breezily compared the trauma of late-term abortion to that of hip-replacement surgery) deny it, some small fraction of the "intact D&Es" performed each year are for elective reasons. Would there be a way, at the federal level, at least to prohibit these? Probably not. Any restriction on such abortions would have to involve an exemption for the health of the mother. But drafting such an exemption, let alone enforcing it, would pose all kinds of challenges. Abortion foes have long argued that the health standard used by many states in their late-term bans is too elastic because it can be interpreted to cover emotional as well as physical conditions. But is the emotional health of the mother a negligible matter when you're dealing with a wanted pregnancy gone terribly wrong? Besides, the health standard can also be framed or interpreted too strictly, failing to take into consideration, for example, the protection of a woman's future fertility.

Though we are all free to make judgments about why people have abortions, and to deem some grounds more morally defensible than others, we cannot legislate these distinctions. It might not seem like much protection to those horrified by late-term abortions, but it's up to doctors to encourage the few women who seek them for elective reasons to consider carrying their healthy pregnancies to term. And it's up to doctors to keep performing a medical procedure that provides some measure of relief in desperate circumstances. •

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NOTEBOOK

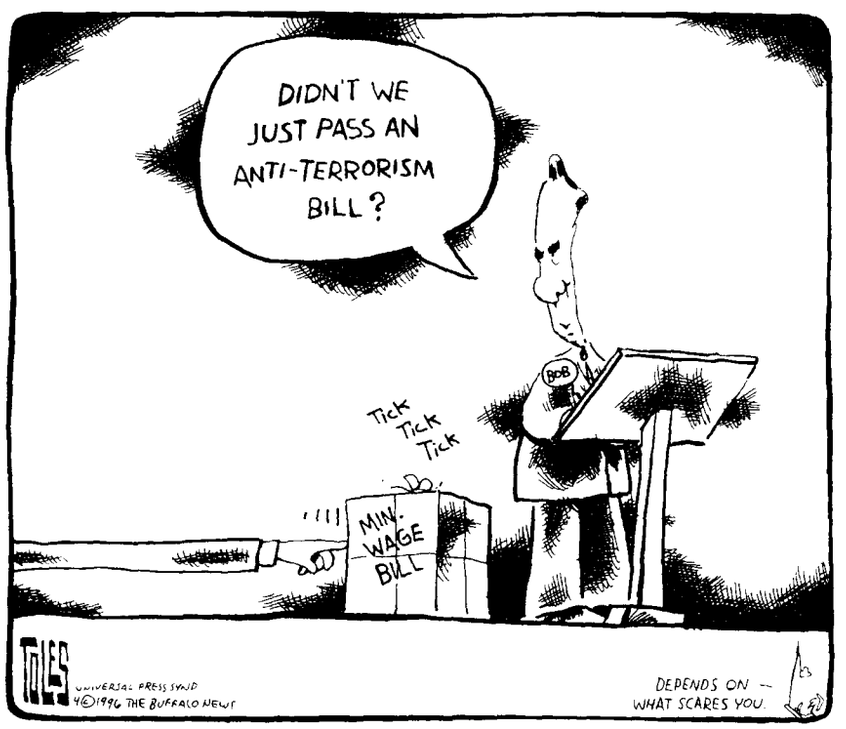
NUTS AND DOLTS: At a Harvard conference commemorating the hundredth anniversary of *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* last week, Stanley Crouch was moved to call Louis Farrakhan "a nut leader of a racist cult." Sounds pretty uncontroversial to us, but a controversy ensued. Crouch's characterization provoked a protest from Cornel West.

West: "To call someone a nut is to decontextualize them and move them outside the human family."

Crouch: "What about the Nazis?"

West: "The Nazis were not just nuts. They were human beings who ended up dehumanizing other people. You don't say people are nuts per se."

A member of the audience pressed West to condemn Farrakhan; West, remember, was the presiding intellectual of the Million Man March and was thanked by Farrakhan at the beginning of his Sermon on the Mall. But West dug in his heels: "Human beings are human beings. Talking of nuts and demonizing people can degenerate into a form of hatred and contempt." Surely, though, there is no greater demonizer in America than Farrakhan. His man at Harvard is sorely in need of a little recontextualization.



INTERNYET: There's a long list of reasons why the Internet has not realized its full civilization-changing potential (it's too expensive, too inaccessible). But a recent *New York Times* "Week In Review" article concocted a new reason: there's too much English on it. "It is the ultimate act of intellectual colonialism," Anatoly Voronov, a Russian Internet provider told the *Times*. "The product comes from America so we either must adapt to English or stop using it." It's not really that dire. For one thing, software developers are constantly inventing better ways to seamlessly translate Internet information between different languages. Besides, what's wrong with English being adopted as the linguistic standard in cyberspace, as it is in business and diplomacy? The forces that drive the Internet reflect the closest approximation of a free market recent history has seen. The product that is emerging is international by nature and, indeed, English by choice. Meanwhile, as anyone knows who has ever used an Internet search engine to find information on, say, the Unabomber and yielded a Babel of documents in Swedish, Dutch and Urdu, a little uniformity might not be bad thing.

DRUG WAR: After five years of convulsive debate, the NIH has decided to undertake a nationwide clinical trial of Kemron, the drug touted by the Nation of Islam as a cure for AIDS. We're all for testing alternative medicine; hope can be its own kind of balm for the virus. But Kemron has already had its day in court. It hasn't been ignored by a "racist white press," as Nation of Islam pamphlets claim: the World Health Organization conducted a 1991 study in Zambia of 150 patients, and the NIH in 1992 reviewed thirteen clinical trials from around the world. They concluded that Kemron had no affect on the HIV virus and that patients should "immediately switch to other drugs," as NIH doctors advised four years ago. The best they could say was that Kemron caused no bad side effects. But side effects can be social, too. What testing this drug does is give false hope to thousands of ill patients, many poor and without health insurance, who are shelling out up to $200 for a one-month supply (and at a time when the new class of drugs called protease inhibitors gives cause for real hope). What it also does is validate people like Dr. Abdul Alim Muhammed, Health Minister for the Nation of Islam, whose Abundant Life Clinic in D.C. has been chosen as one of the test sites. Muhammed once told a Baltimore crowd that AIDS is "the perfect genocidal weapon" manufactured by the white government against black people, then issued death threats against Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke. Doctor William Duncan, associate director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, justifies the NIH's decision like this: "The fact is, a large segment of the black population continues to believe in it and forgo other treatments, and we feel it is therefore important to find out the truth." Truth may not be exactly what the Nation of Islam is after. •

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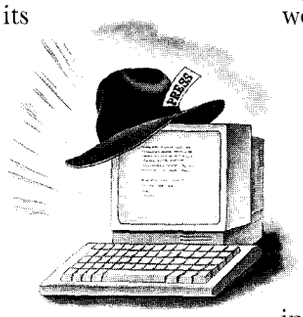
BAD TRIP

By Jacob Heilbrunn

No newspaper has as acute a sense of its historical mission as *The New York Times*. Now that the *Times* magazine has reached the 100-year milestone, it has begun celebrating its own history with a flurry of special sections. On April 14, the Sunday magazine reprinted a host of articles from the past century that, we were told, "carry some special gleam in the light of historical hindsight."

During this stroll down memory lane, the *Times* invoked everyone from W.E.B. Du Bois to Brooks Atkinson to Winston Churchill. And, like a genial emcee, it glided past a few disruptive guests at the party. As the paper banged the drum for its honor roll, however, the record of old star correspondents such as Harrison Salisbury and Herbert Matthews could not be entirely smoothed over. While every newspaper has had its natural share of mishaps, these antique reminders of the *Times*'s penchant for overlooking the excesses of communism threatened to cast a somewhat less flattering light on the festivities.



The dancing around the past began in the "Week in Review" section, where the *Times* Company devoted a full page to listing its previous and current Pulitzer Prize winners. Fifth on the list is Walter Duranty: "1932 . . . for coverage of the news from Russia," says the anodyne notice. But that coverage consisted of *not* covering the mass Ukrainian famine engineered by Stalin. In June 1990, the *Times*, in a signed editorial by Karl E. Meyer, at last conceded that Duranty's "was some of the worst reporting to appear in this newspaper." Though Duranty was hardly an isolated case in the 1930s—THE NEW REPUBLIC was another exponent of what was known in progressive circles as the "Soviet Experiment"—he set the tone for future correspondents at the *Times*.

Consider his successor, Harold Denny. In the introduction to the special *Times* magazine, editor Jack Rosenthal informs us that "Denny, a *Times* war correspondent, was with the American soldiers who liberated Buchenwald in April 1945" and leaves it at that. Unfortunately, Denny's record encompasses more than that honorable moment. As the *Times*'s Moscow correspondent from 1934 to 1939, Denny showered praise on Stalin and his camarilla. In 1934, when he toured famine areas in the Ukraine, Denny stymied American relief efforts by cabling back to New York: "Thus far no famine has been found nor an indication of famine in the year to come, though many peasants must draw in their belts and eat food they do not like until the 1935 harvest."

Two years later, when the purge trials began, Denny was at it again. After the first trial, Denny concluded: "conversations with individuals indicate a general feeling that justice had been done." And, in 1937, when Stalin was deporting millions to the Gulag, Denny waxed rhapsodic about the Christmas spirit in Moscow: "Russia tonight is having the gayest celebration since the revolution. . . . Moscow tonight powerfully reminded a sojourner from the Western world of any town in America on Christmas Eve. . . . All the worker's [sic] clubs are having special entertainment, and in every home friends are gathered around boards groaning with solid and liquid cheer." The third trial of Bukharin and company, in 1938, prompted Denny to defend the use of torture as a judicial instrument: "It does not necessarily prove that the confessions in essence were untrue."

Though it can at least be said that Denny's dispatches have sunk into oblivion, those of Herbert Matthews are a different matter. The "Who's Who" list of writers for the magazine tells us only that "Herbert L. Matthews won the George Polk Memorial Award for a series on the Cuban revolution." But in the 1930s Matthews distinguished himself at the *Times* by championing Italian fascists and Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia in his dispatches. By the 1950s he had discovered a new savior: Fidel Castro.

The *Times* magazine reproduces a March 8, 1959, panegyric from Matthews to Castro in which he depicts Castro as having "freed Cuba. . . . He has been a destroyer; now he must create." But Matthews helped create Castro in the first place. In February 1957 he trekked into the Sierra Maestra to interview the young guerrilla leader, and in a front-page article that sent shock waves around the world—it had been widely assumed that Castro was a spent force—Matthews warned of Castro's vast army, led by "an educated, dedicated fanatic, a man of ideals, of courage. . . ." In fact, Castro had only eighteen armed men in his camp.

But Matthews saw what he wanted to see. "This is not a communist revolution in any sense of the word," he later wrote, "and there are no Communists in positions of control." By the mid-'60s, Matthews's paeans to Castro finally became too much for the *Times*, and, like Duranty in the early '30s, he was pulled off his beat. By then, it was Harrison Salisbury who had moved on to describing reeducation camps during the Chinese Cultural Revolution as "a combination of a YMCA camp and a Catholic retreat."

So in the light of historical hindsight, as the *Times* incautiously put it, there were a few spoilers at the party. It may seem unsporting to recall their past antics, but it is the *Times*, after all, that has wheeled them out for a second go-round. Even gleaming 100th anniversaries can be tarnished by a few unwelcome memories. •

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Why are blue-collar gals so angry?

WORKING GIRLS

By Hanna Rosin

If you're a close listener, you'll notice that the buzz from the big-eared billionaire's corner has keened into a higher pitch. Not because the lumpen Joes are demanding to be heard this election season, but because they've been drowned out by their equally disgruntled better halves: the angry white females, America's hottest new swing vote. "Every poll shows that, regardless of where they come from, less-educated blue-collar women are the largest group of volatile voters," says Mary Beth Cahill of Emily's List, whose members are more likely to have blue hair than blue collars. "We've become convinced that winning them over is the key to Democratic fortunes."

While Ross Perot and Bob Dole are still busy wooing the men, Democratic pollsters have been jetting to places like Tacoma, Washington, and Waukegan, Illinois, in search of non-college-educated women earning less than $30,000 a year. What they've found is an open hydrant of disaffection just waiting to be tapped. The women are "depressed," "disgusted," indeed "royally disgusted" with politics and with their daily lives. They work ten hours a day filing insurance forms or sorting out chicken parts and still can't pay the hospital bills. They take extra jobs at Christmas so they can phone in gifts to the Home Shopping Network. Few things in life give them pleasure: "Hope and Gloria" is one, Lotto is another. "I feel like I'm working more and more and getting further and further away from my dream," says one woman in a lemon-yellow t-shirt and a Jackson Browne haircut, shown in a video of an Emily's List focus group. "I used to think if I'd be making this much I'd be doing real good."

Like most poll-driven logic, the Democrats' decision to focus on blue-collar women is grade-school simple. It's based on the concept of "drop-off" voters, people who voted in the 1992 presidential elections but stayed home from congressional races two years later, when the Democrats were hammered. Almost half of the "drop-off" voters were working-class women, pollsters have found, and sparking these women's interest in 1996 could win Democrats back the House and the White House.

Operation Thelma and Louise has already been road tested. It was conceived during the 1994 Senate race between Dianne Feinstein and Michael Huffington. Emily's List raided the voter files to find women who had voted in 1992 but who skipped the June primary and launched a blitzkrieg of phone calls and direct mail to 900,000 of them. They convinced almost half to vote, and Feinstein squeaked through with only 165,000 votes.

Now the Clinton campaign has set up its own women's outreach office. But they don't stick to traditional women's issues like abortion rights and maternity leave. That's because blue-collar women more often than their yuppie counterparts defy gender solidarity and share many of the same concerns as their husbands. "We want to highlight what this president has done for women, but we define that broadly," says Stephenie Foster, who heads the office. "We'll focus on education, the environment, student loans, economic opportunity, health and safety." They've already filmed campaign ads that target women and show the president talking about school uniforms.

But, judging from the Emily's List focus groups, winning over today's Norma Raes won't be a cakewalk. "What words come to mind when you think of Bill Clinton?" asks the focus group leader, a maternal figure in a blue shirt. "Wussy," answers one woman. "Pantywaist," adds another blithely, on her way to the coffee machine. The women see through his boyish charm. "He really tries to act like he gets it, but he doesn't," says a woman with cropped gray hair. "He'll say one thing, and then two weeks later he'll say something else." The most they seem to feel for the president who has appointed more women to higher office than any before him is pity. "I think he's basically a good person, I mean, he tries," offers one woman hopefully.

Trying does count for something. Most of the women express visceral hostility toward Gingrich and terror that he'd leave them in the cold; at least a dozen mention tax breaks to the rich and the death of Social Security. One woman talks about a stint on welfare after her husband lost his job, "dressing scuzzy just so people wouldn't look at me bad." But she also complains about "19-year-olds going to the welfare office with their babies, as if they owe us something. They don't owe us nothing." The struggle to break into the middle class seems to have left some of these women with a version of the immigrant's mentality—some sympathy in hard times is appreciated, but spare us the coddling; we'd rather work, thank you. Clinton may be a little too nice.

Immigration itself is another arena where Clintonism leaves the blue-collar women cold. Explaining why the women stayed home in 1994, Ellen Malcolm, president of Emily's List, writes that they were turned off by "public displays of bravado over ... punishing illegal immigrants." But several women on the tapes sound a Buchananite note, complaining about the threat of foreigners, about the U.S. "sending money everywhere else when we don't do enough for our own country"; they reminisce about a long-ago time when "immigrants came here to get a job and work." In California, the state where, thanks to Emily's List, women did vote in 1994, the only commercials Pete Wilson ran by the end of the campaign showed grainy footage of Mexicans hopping over the fence. He won by a large margin.

The women also slip in and out of identification with their own gender. One of them blames her predicament on callous professional women who snub her for staying

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home with the kids. "The things I did raising kids is far more harder than organizing shirts at a J.C. Penney store," says another. "But I can't get hired at places like that because I'm not thin enough, I'm not young enough, I'm not professional enough. Women are my worst enemies." Class bitterness seems to matter for them more than the bonds of sisterhood. After watching an ad for one candidate, they decide she wouldn't understand their lives because she looks "rich and wealthy," standing at a construction site in high heels.

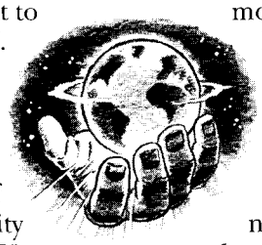
Still, Clinton could warm their blue hearts in ways that Bob Dole, and probably no Republican, could. One concern the women articulate that their husbands don't is a desperate preoccupation with family values, based not on evangelical codewords but on economic security. Unlike men, who focus on bank accounts, the women have a broader conception of shelter; they worry about basics—health insurance, child care and schools—issues on which Clinton has a clear advantage. Already the campaign has put out a pamphlet called "Family," in which women named Dotty and Jackie fret about the future. It's treacly, but it's winning over even Southern white women, who, polls show, are deserting Republicans in droves. And it may spare us more stories of Hope, Arkansas. •

NATIONAL INSECURITY

DUES AND DON'TS

By Charles Lane

As the United Nations' special representative in former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi was notoriously diffident in the face of Serb atrocities. A lifelong U.N. apparatchik, he conserves his enthusiasm for other causes—like the United Nations University. As Akashi explained in his memorable 1993 book, *An Agenda for Hope*, UNU is a monument to "Japan's positive contributions" to the U.N. and "to the world, through the generation of new ideas and visions."



To the less visionary, however, the fourteen-story building, erected during Akashi's tenure as a U.N. undersecretary in his home capital of Tokyo, stands as a monument to U.N. pomposity and waste. Staffed by sixty-three people, UNU was built with $100 million of Japan's money on land worth $2 billion. "I've never seen any sign of the UNU having a palpable impact on the outside world," Leslie Schenk, an American who served as the university's chief of personnel for seven years, told *The Washington Post* in 1992. If the U.N. had simply asked Japan to sell the land, and to donate the proceeds plus the cost of the building, the organization would have received an amount nearly equal to its operating budget in New York.

Keep UNU in mind as foreign-policy types vent their embarrassment over the $1.6 billion in dues and peacekeeping costs the United States owes the United Nations. "DON'T CAPSIZE THE U.N." cries *The New York Times* editorial page. In its news columns, the *Times* warns of dire cutbacks in such agencies as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Development Program. Some *Times* readers are so embarrassed that they have sent the U.N. their own contributions of $4.40 each (the estimated per capita cost of retiring the U.S. debt). The campaign was kicked off by former Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead, who is—you guessed it—"more and more embarrassed" by America's failure to pay.

As usual, the bad guys in this drama are the Republican Congress and especially Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina, who is using his position as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to delay U.N. funding. Though Helms has made an issue of the U.N. bureaucracy's legendary waste and corruption, his real agenda is the misguided one of getting rid of the U.N. altogether. But in this instance his extremism has also served a useful, clarifying function.

That's because the U.N.'s financial crisis is not a crisis of America's making. The people who should really be embarrassed that the organization finds itself in this fix are the U.N.'s own civil servants. For decades, they have righteously demanded more and more American (and Japanese and European) cash, even as they have resisted efforts to introduce accountability into the out-of-control U.N. bureaucracy.

UNU is only a modest instance of the organization's penchant for mismanagement and gigantism. The WHO, for example, spends over $1 billion every two years and employs 6,000 staff and consultants. Since its founding in 1945, the Food and Agriculture Organization has spent over $12 billion, with minimal impact on world hunger—perhaps because half of the money was spent on salaries and maintenance at its lavish Rome headquarters, according to the *Post*. The U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are outmoded economic planning bodies whose few legitimate functions, such as gathering statistics, can be done by the World Trade Organization or the World Bank. But they consume tens of millions of dollars per year.

The basic problem is that the U.N.'s budget is voted on by the General Assembly. Tiny nations, often corruptly governed themselves, who contribute only a fraction of the organization's resources, essentially have the power to decide how American money will be spent, which means they can treat it as a free source of patronage. And, since the U.S. has no veto in the General Assembly, its only leverage against this is the brusque, "embarrassing" one of withholding the money it is legally obligated to pay.

To be sure, the United States has no right to withhold

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Inclusion Can Hurt Everyone

Today's guest columnist is Romy Wyllie, an interior designer in Pasadena, California, who is writing a book about bringing up a son with Down syndrome. Her article also appeared in the* Los Angeles Times, *February 26, 1996, and in the* Chicago Tribune, *March 8, 1996.

All children will suffer if the pressure for inclusion eliminates valuable special education programs.

Can developmentally disabled children learn more in a mainstream classroom than they would in a special class? Thirty-five years ago, most mentally and physically handicapped children were excluded from any form of education in public schools. Today, the pendulum has swung with full force in the opposite direction as a class-action lawsuit pressures the Los Angeles schools to place a larger number of disabled students in mainstream classes and reduce the school system's reliance on separate special education programs.

Educators have spent years developing specialized methods for teaching retarded children to read and write at a pace appropriate for their level of learning. Now, all that effort may go to waste.

The new term, *inclusion*, sounds democratic and forward-thinking, but does it really address the needs of the children? Administrators, lawyers, and parents can dream of a perfect world where every disabled child is accepted by peers in a mainstream class. But policies are too often based on generalizations developed by professionals who are out of touch with the reality of the classroom situation.

Is a severely disabled child in a wheelchair included in a regular classroom setting if he or she has to spend the day at the back of the room near the exit, ignored by a busy teacher trying to cope with 29 normal, active students? What do regular students, already struggling with their own learning, gain from the presence of an emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded student who has a fit, throws a tantrum, or attacks a classmate?

The concept of inclusion is deceptive because it helps parents believe their child is being normalized. It takes away the stigma of "special education," "disabled" or "retarded." It makes administrators feel good because they are integrating all students into one common program. In reality, inclusion is creating a nightmare for the teachers and is harming both regular and special students.

When Andrew, our Down syndrome son, was born 37 years ago, the doctor suggested he be placed in an institution. But we ignored the doctor's advice and brought up Andrew as an integral part of our family. Andrew benefited from the individual attention of specially trained teachers in special education classes in the Chicago public schools. A partial mainstreaming program in Kenwood Academy helped his social adjustment and taught other students to accept him.

Placement in special or regular classes should be adjusted according to a student's progress. If, in his early formative years, Andrew had been included in a regular elementary classroom with his own age group, he would have foundered as he struggled to learn. Failure would have destroyed his self-esteem.

As a result of his educational experience and home life, Andrew acquired confidence and the skills to function in the working world. He now lives at the Lambs Farm, a community for the handicapped in Libertyville, Illinois, where he enjoys an active social life under the umbrella of a well-run residential program. For the last 12 years, he has worked full-time at a supermarket in Lake Forest, Illinois. He is known for his conscientiousness and outstanding punctuality. Customers ask for him because he packs their groceries so carefully.

Instead of working with disabled children in a separate program, special education teachers coping with inclusion are left to worry about their students reaching high school without being able to write a simple sentence or count money because an aide did their homework for them. It is important to teach these children the basic skills of living. For some, a work-study program will enable them to find jobs and live independently.

Special education encompasses a wide range of disabilities, from high-functioning children who can benefit from being included in a regular classroom setting to the severely disabled who need one-on-one training in a separate program. Who will gain from the integration of all children, regardless of physical or mental ability? Will the administrators be praised for their all-embracing policy? Will the school system save money? Will the parents feel less guilty? Will the high-functioning disabled children be better educated and better adjusted? Will the severely disabled child have his needs met?

There are too many variables. All children will suffer if the pressure for inclusion eliminates valuable special education programs. Disabled students should have their needs assessed individually and be placed in settings that will provide them with the best training for life.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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its money as a show of disagreement with any particular U.N. policy or, as Senator Helms would, out of contempt for the institution itself. Such a blunt attempt to buy political outcomes would, as the *Times* argues, undermine an organization whose impartial credentials can be bent to American purposes—as in the Persian Gulf, Kurdistan, Haiti and elsewhere.

Still, a pro-U.N. case can be made for playing hardball on the money issue. The United Nations is both an ideal and an institution. By now, however, the institution—made up of Yasushi Akashi and his fellow U.N. suits—has come to threaten the ideal. For, when U.N. bureaucrats speak of their devotion to the organization, they are referring not only to the concept of international harmonization but to its reification—"the secretariat" and "specialist agencies" that they populate. There is a link between the U.N. culture of flabby diplothought and the culture of easy money engendered by the steady flow of U.S. funds. Both stem from a lack of political accountability. U.N. staff work for "the member states." Their mission is to attend to the political needs of this abstraction and its component parts. Sometimes that means carrying out legitimate diplomatic functions, but just as often it can mean glossing over genocide in Bosnia or hectoring Israel and the U.S. about the Palestinians. As long as U.N. bureaucrats hew to the lowest moral and political common denominator, they can pursue their comfortable careers undisturbed.

The way to extirpate this culture, and thus bolster the legitimacy of the U.N. and its operations, is to starve it of the financial fuel on which it runs. Political realities are such, however, that the truly drastic reforms the organization needs cannot be enacted by U.S. fiat. The question, then, is when to take "yes" for an answer from the U.N. To date, the U.N. has grudgingly agreed to some U.S.-inspired reforms, such as the establishment of an inspector general's office and a no-growth budget for 1996-1997. This would entail a cutback of over 10 percent in the organization's 10,000-person New York payroll. But, lately, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, campaigning for re-election among member delegations who like easy U.N. living in New York, has been waffling about the layoffs.

The Clinton administration advocates paying U.S. arrears over five years, arguing to Congress that only after America has begun to do so will it have the credibility to insist that the U.N. go through with the layoffs, and with a reduction in the U.S. share of U.N. dues from 25 to 20 percent of the organization's budget. In the past, however, the General Assembly and the bureaucracy have found ways to renege on such promises. As a sign that things have really changed, Boutros-Ghali should publicly spell out a plan for cutting excess workers as necessitated by the no-growth budget (without the usual gimmicks, like rehiring everyone as a consultant) and commit himself to pushing the layoffs through the General Assembly. If the secretary-general won't be reasonable with Bill Clinton, he may find himself dealing with Jesse Helms. •

Has Ed Rendell saved the city?

PHILADELPHIA STORY

By Stephen Glass

Nearly everyone who has followed Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell's skyrocketing career remembers two images. The first is the mayor on his hands and knees, crammed into a bathroom stall, scrubbing a City Hall toilet. The second is Rendell at a newly reopened public pool, shirtless, unashamed of his hairy back and two-inch roll of fat, squeezed into ill-fitting swimming trunks and doing cannonball dives.

Dubbed "America's Mayor" by Al Gore, Rendell is the Michael Jordan of the nation's cities: where others fail, he succeeds effortlessly. In January 1992 he took charge of a city with a $200 million deficit and bonds rated worse than junk. Eighteen months later, he had balanced the budget without raising taxes. In his re-election campaign for mayor last year, Rendell raised more than Pennsylvania Senator Arlen Specter did in his campaign for president. And Rendell won with more than 70 percent of the vote. It's only a matter of time, analysts say, before he turns his sights to higher office.

The Rendell legend—a man who through sheer hard work (he puts in nineteen hours a day) and chutzpah (he attends as many as twenty public events on a given Saturday) rescues an urban basket case—is made for the national media. *The Washington Post* effused that he is the mayor every new mayor promises to copy, adding that, when he talks, "words and ideas [are] spilling out with a momentum akin to Olympic skiing." *Governing* magazine said he would be perfect in the leading role of a Clint Eastwood movie: "Enter [Rendell], the man on the white horse, the fellow who will sweep out the bad guys and get the town running again." Even *The Economist* and *Financial Times* have told their readers that Rendell is the American mayor to watch.

But the substance, sadly, can't match the spin. At the root of Philadelphia's problems, like those of other smokestack cities, is a declining job base. The city has lost 250,000 factory jobs in the past twenty-five years. During that time, a quarter of its population—disproportionately its wealthiest—has moved away.

Under Rendell the pace has actually quickened. The city's population declined every year during the can-do Democrat's first term, according to the Census Department; a recent poll by *The Philadelphia Inquirer* found that 43 percent of the remaining residents would like to leave. While the city gained 5,000 jobs during the last term of Rendell's much-maligned predecessor, Wilson

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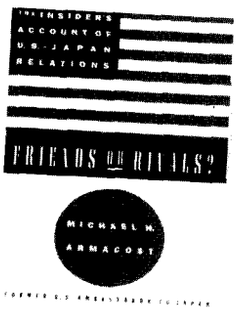

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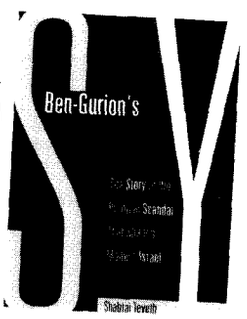

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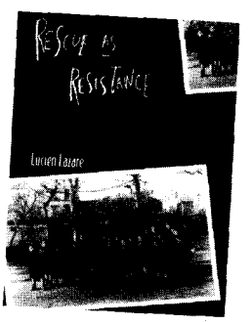

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Goode, it has lost more than 50,000 since Rendell took over. Breyer's ice cream and the Fleer Corporation recently closed their local plants, and Scott Paper Company and Whitman chocolates have moved. The Philadelphia shipyard—the nation's oldest naval base and an essential element of Philadelphia's culture—is on its last leg. Its shutdown will cost another 9,000 jobs.

The mayor's plan? To make Philadelphia America's number-one tourist destination. Rendell promised that millions would flock to the nation's fifth-largest city to see Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell. But, despite his tireless cheerleading, the tourists haven't come. In the last three years of Goode's administration, tourism increased by more than 18 percent. During Rendell's first three years growth dropped to 11 percent. As one City Council member asked, "Could you imagine any family sitting around the dinner table and saying, 'Let's go to Philadelphia'? They'd only come if they had family here."

When pressed on how he plans to attract vacationers, Rendell responds with sloganeering, dropping phrases that sound a lot like the pep talks he gives the Phillies on local sports shows: "We're in this together, so let's make it good," he said at one community meeting.

As evidence that the tourism campaign is working, he points to the city's convention center, which he says is booked fifty-one out of fifty-two weeks this year. True, but it still loses money. City Hall injects about $35 million a year to cover its operating losses and debt.

Even Rendell's most lauded accomplishment—balancing the budget without raising taxes—is dubious. Since Pennsylvania's constitution placed enormous restrictions on how Philadelphia could borrow money to pay off the budget shortfall it faced in the early 1990s, the state government set up a complex system that allowed a third party to issue bonds for the city. This organization, called PICA, then loaned the money to the city. The entire mechanism, however, was completed months before Rendell took office. So, in effect, the budget was balanced by his predecessor.

Moreover, Rendell may soon send the city into debt once again. In his five-year plan issued earlier this year, the mayor balances the city's projected budget with an estimated $89 million in riverboat gambling revenue. But the chances that Harrisburg will allow gambling in the city are growing dimmer every day. Without it, using Rendell's own estimates for the city's future revenue, Philadelphia will run a $58 million deficit in the year 2001.

Rendell's claim that he has not raised taxes is also sketchy. In order for PICA to issue the bonds, Philadelphia raised sales taxes by 1 percent. This increase has generated about $90 million a year, far more than the interest on the PICA loan. Since this, too, occurred months before Rendell took over, he is technically correct in saying he didn't raise taxes. But he has benefited enormously from the increase.

Anyway, Philadelphia already taxes its residents more than almost any other major city, a burden Rendell has not relieved. In 1993, a family of four earning $25,000 paid $3,201 in taxes. In New York and Chicago the same family handed over $2,700; in Los Angeles, only $1,640.

While the mayor says he will serve out his term, nearly everyone in Philadelphia has doubts. Term limits prohibit Rendell from being re-elected mayor, and polls indicate he is the only public official who registers positively in statewide polls. Local observers say his ongoing spin and frequent meetings in Washington point to an upcoming run for the Senate or for governor.

Meanwhile, Joe Gyourko, a Wharton Business School professor who describes himself as a Rendell fan, says the city is basically lost. He urges reporters, with little success, to look beyond the commercial district's posh boutiques and glimmering waterfront. Drive, he says, since it is unsafe to walk, to the neighborhoods outside the upscale downtown. Graffiti-splattered north Philadelphia defines urban decay. The tight Italian community of south Philadelphia is unraveling as jobs evaporate.

More and more Philadelphians are venting these concerns at town meetings. Rendell responds calmly with what his detractors call "up talk." He insists that one person can make a difference and, in Clintonian fashion, honors individuals who have demonstrated civic virtue. With the eloquence he once employed in closing arguments, the former prosecutor often rallies the audience to standing ovations. As one City Council member puts it: "They'll ask him about jobs, and Rendell talks, he whirls you, everyone has a good time. He leaves, and, twenty minutes later, we're left trying to figure out the answer to our questions." •

An American stepchild's plight.

BORN IN THE USA

By Peter Beinart

In Accra, Ghana, on a March day in 1957, Liberian Ambassador Charles King attended the birth of Africa's second black republic. As representative of its first, a country with a more than 100-year head start over its West African neighbor, King might have felt empathy or enthusiasm. Instead, he felt envy. Surrounded by British notables arrayed to welcome an independent Ghana into the Commonwealth, he remarked that his country, Liberia, had not "reaped the advantages of colonialism."

A few weeks ago as Ghanaian President Jerry Rawlings flew on a mission of mercy to Monrovia, capital of a

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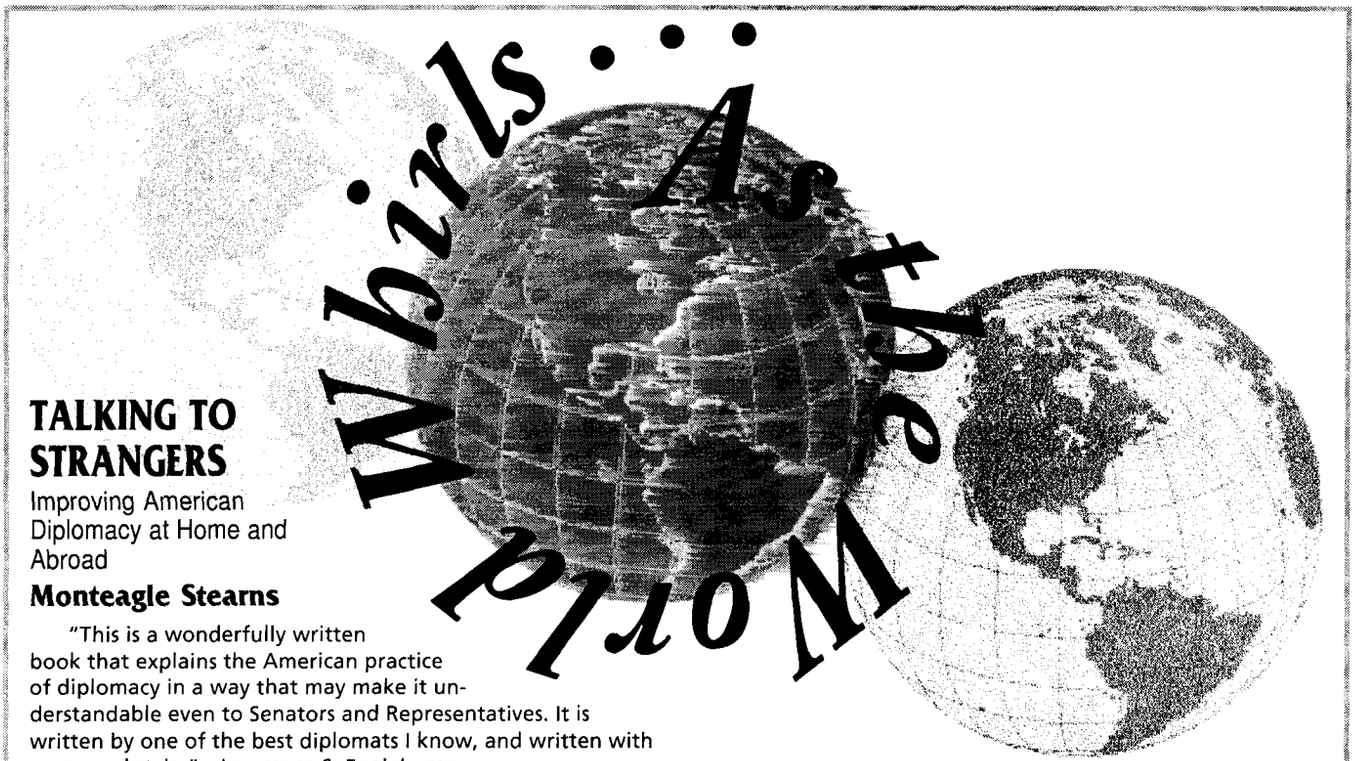

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country whose carnival of horrors includes the videotaped torture of its last functioning ruler and the death or displacement of more than half the population, often at the hands of armed, drug-addicted children, King's words seemed prophetic. For among the advantages his country had not reaped was the paternalistic concern of a foreign power willing, even after independence, to keep the peace. Like Ghana, Liberia had its own stepparents. But this month, as its six-year civil war produced yet another shocking spasm of violence, American Marines ventured onshore only to evacuate their own. As King recognized, Liberia had the misfortune of being the neo-colony of a country, the United States, unwilling to bear the responsibilities of neo-colonialism.

In some ways, Liberia's colonial experience was typical. Like the British who established domicile in Kenya and Rhodesia, or the French who did so in Algeria, the freed American slaves who returned to the West African shores from which their ancestors had been uprooted showed a fierce attachment to their country of origin: Liberia's flag resembles the Stars and Stripes, its police uniforms are patterned after New York's, and its educational institutions were designed with help from Cornell, Northwestern, Texas A & M and Harvard. Liberia gained independence in 1847, but it was independence for the tiny Americo-Liberian elite that occupied the coastal cities. For the country's indigenous, rural masses, independence came in April 1980, when Krahn tribesman Samuel Doe overthrew the Americo-Liberian oligarchy of President William Tolbert.

As it happened, Doe's triumph took place the same week that another native leader, Robert Mugabe, overthrew his country's settler elite: the British of Rhodesia. But the two uprisings followed quite different courses. In 1979, with Rhodesia's black masses in armed revolt, Britain cloistered both sides at London's Lancaster House and brokered a transfer of power that has resulted in sixteen years of stable if autocratic black government. The U.S., stepparent to the Americo-Liberian elite, did no such thing. American policy toward Liberia had been characterized by what Africanist Gus Liebenow refers to as "benign neglect," and the U.S. let neighboring governments take the diplomatic initiative. As one U.S. official put it, "We cannot afford to be far ahead of the African states—particularly Nigeria—on this issue."

In the absence of American leadership, the transfer of power did not go well. Doe, after all, was a functionally illiterate master-sergeant. And his regime initiated a reputation for brutality by executing thirteen former government officials on a Monrovia beach. The United States responded by evacuating American civilians.

Because of their recognized cultural connection to Britain, and their family ties to its residents, the fate of white Rhodesians mattered to the British government. And the fate of black-run Zimbabwe mattered to Britain because its colonial heritage and Commonwealth membership made it a country over whom Britain could wield some influence and so enhance its claim to great-power status. It was in this way that Zimbabwe, and to a lesser degree Ghana, "reaped the advantages" of colonialism, one of which was neo-colonialism. Those advantages have been even greater in the case of France's former colonies, where the *Quai d'Orsay* has resolutely maintained order, either by coming to the aid of favored autocrats (as its troops did last week in the Central African Republic) or by ousting them for more attractive candidates.

This is not to say that neo-colonialism is edifying. The former French colonies that allow Paris to control their monetary supply, direct their foreign relations, dump overpriced manufactured goods into their markets and station troops on their soil are sacrificing some of their sovereignty. Furthermore, neither France nor Britain has traditionally exhibited much interest in African democracy. But British and French paternalism have at least rested on a commitment to stability in their former colonies and to ameliorating the government abuse that threatens it. These are principles that Americans have tended to denigrate. But, in countries that exist only on maps, stability is not a goal to be dismissed lightly. And in Africa, where democracy has been almost nonexistent, it is reckless to undermine moderate autocracies and assume the alternative will be preferable. America has used both anti-communism and democracy as justifications for its unwillingness to maintain order in Liberia. But a British or French diplomat looking at the events of last week—Liberians once again massacring each other while Marines hastily evacuate U.S. civilians—would likely chalk it up to America's regrettable lack of *noblesse oblige*.

This should have been apparent after Doe's coup. After all, the United States had not lifted a finger to protect the ousted Americo-Liberian ruling class. But Doe obscured this reality. Globally, his takeover coincided with the reignition of the cold war following the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan; regionally, it coincided with Libya's 1978 foray into Chad. Doe exploited the Reagan administration's anxieties, and during the first half of the 1980s Liberia received more U.S. aid than it had over the entire preceding century. Ronald Reagan even hosted the Liberian leader at the White House, introducing him in a Rose Garden ceremony as "Chairman Moe."

This was engagement but not neo-colonialism. Although Liberian officials stressed their country's historic links to the U.S., America had little interest in Liberia beyond its anti-communism. Even George Bush, who saw the country's strategic value, declared that Liberia wasn't worth a single American life. For close to a decade, a debate raged between cold warriors who claimed the U.S. should tolerate Doe's abuses and liberals who argued that the U.S. should abandon him. In fact, the U.S. followed the two policies in succession, and both proved disastrous. From 1981 to 1988, the U.S. bankrolled Doe, praised his fraudulent 1985 re-election as "free and open" and watched as he, like American client Mohammed Siad Barré in Somalia, fanned ethnic hatred and undermined civil society. Then, in late 1988, embarrassed by a General Accounting Office study show-

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ing that Doe's men had stolen millions in American aid, the Reagan administration belatedly cut funding.

It was a victory for those who argued that America should not condone tyranny. But the moralists did not realize that their human rights concerns were being used as a cover for America's retreat from countries that the cold war's end had left marginal. And they were vulnerable to this ploy because they assumed much too blithely (an assumption never shared in London or Paris) that once dictators lost access to foreign aid democracy would follow. As a result, they ignored the danger of abandoning leaders of fragile states without investing in their successors.

On December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor, a former Doe official who had escaped from the Massachusetts jail where he was imprisoned on charges of embezzlement, led an invasion into Liberia from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire. Moving into territories populated by the Gio and Mano, peoples who had suffered terribly at the hands of Doe's mostly Krahn army, Taylor's troops advanced swiftly. By the summer of 1990, they were near the suburbs of Monrovia.

Faced with distasteful options in a country in which it no longer had major interests, the U.S. remained passive. When the Bush administration sent two military officials to advise Doe, they were withdrawn in the face of American opposition. The U.S., which disliked Charles Taylor, whose men had committed terrible abuses and who had ties to Libya, was nonetheless unwilling to bolster Doe or arrange a rebel takeover (as it had in Ethiopia in 1991 when, partly to allow Israel's rescue of Ethiopia's Jews, it negotiated a peaceful government surrender of the capital). Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen now admits that "A modest [U.S.] intervention at that point to end the fighting in Monrovia could have avoided the prolonged conflict."

But the U.S. did not act, and Liberia's neighbors stepped into the breach. Under the banner of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria, which had its own problems with Taylor, sent troops to protect Monrovia. A spinoff rebel group lured Doe into the open and then videotaped his murder (a video that has been sold freely throughout West Africa). The Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) installed an interim government and protected it from Taylor, but its troops soon lost their non-partisan image—fighting with some factions against others, committing human rights abuses and even running drugs.

The Bush administration's options remained unpalatable, and so American apathy and American moralism once again made common cause. Rather than taking political action—supplying the monitoring group with the means to truly weaken Taylor or condoning his assumption of power—the U.S. treated Liberia as a humanitarian crisis. Between 1990 and last year it sent Liberia $440 million, but the vast majority went to relief efforts. The impoverished West African states, by contrast, remained the key actors, spending more than $4 billion on the peacekeeping effort that kept Taylor from taking Monrovia. The Nigerian ambassador in Liberia said, "We could not understand how the U.S., with its long-standing relationship with Liberia, could remain so aloof."

Then, last year, Nigerian strongman Sani Abacha came to terms with Taylor, paving the way for a peace agreement negotiated last August in the Nigerian capital of Abuja. Crucial to the arrangement was the monitoring group's deployment throughout the country to oversee disarmament of the different factions. At a donor conference in New York, the U.N. estimated the cost of disarming Liberia's troops at $150 million. The donors pledged $145 million overall, but most was for humanitarian purposes. The United States, which was expected to take the lead, pledged only $10 million for the monitoring group. Then, in the fall of last year, American-Nigerian relations declined sharply following the execution of Ogoni dissident Ken Saro-Wiwa. As a result, the U.S. remained relatively aloof from the disarmament operation, even refusing to hand over the trucks it had promised directly to the Nigerians who would ride in them, insisting instead that they be controlled by independent agencies. In late January, when Madeleine Albright arrived in Liberia to declare that "we have no intention of our logistical support being squandered by anyone's failure of political will," she was expressing an unnecessary worry. The American equipment had not arrived, and disarmament had barely begun. In mid-April, fighting resumed.

The current ceasefire negotiations are being led not by the U.S., which remains remarkably passive, but by Ghana, current head of the Economic Community of West African States, and Nigeria. But, while Liberia's neighbors can take the lead politically, they are simply too poor to disarm the country. The United States needs to cough up money to help them, and it should realize that it is buying peace, not perfection. It is unlikely that the Nigerians and other participants in the West African States Monitoring Group will act completely impartially, let alone that they will create the conditions for a free election anytime soon. A more realistic scenario is that Nigeria rules in conjunction with one or two powerful warlords. Liberia's neighbors, after all, may not be beacons of democracy, but they have a self-interest in stability.

And, if Nigeria is smart, and the Liberians are lucky, the country's ruling coalition will be based on the strategy that Britain and France have followed in choosing their clients. Pick a leader from the most numerous and powerful ethnic group so opponents will be less likely to challenge him. Insecure regimes are the most brutal. And let him come from the best-educated ethnic group in order to get the most competent government functionaries. The Nigerians, who have come to terms with their former enemy Taylor, are probably following exactly these principles. And so Nigeria may become what the United States has consistently been too indifferent and too pure to be: Liberia's neo-colonial power. •

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Why the Fed bashers are wrong.

GROW UP

By Matthew Miller

It's no surprise in a campaign year to find a clamor for more growth and a penchant for sloppy economic arguments. In the primaries, it was tax-cutting supply-siders Steve Forbes and Jack Kemp, egged on by their allies at *The Wall Street Journal*'s editorial page, who took up the chorus. Now it's liberal economists Lester Thurow and Robert Eisner, Wall Street pooh-bah Felix Rohaytn and manufacturing CEOs like Tenneco's Dana Mead and General Electric's Jack Welch. The Federal Reserve and its chairman, Alan Greenspan, we're told, are strangling the economy in the misguided belief that growth in excess of 2.5 percent will spark inflation. Worse, the claim goes, because this slow-growth conspiracy permeates officialdom—both the Congressional Budget Office and the Clinton administration, for example, forecast such anemic growth over the next seven years—it's sure to be self-fulfilling. If the Fed would just take its foot off the brakes and lower interest rates, the dissenters say, the economy would roar like it did in the 1960s, when we grew more than 4 percent yearly with 2.5 percent inflation. With five consecutive years of inflation at 3 percent or less, the Fed is chasing a ghost.

Are the Fed bashers right? To answer that question, let's first assume that almost everyone wants more economic growth, just as almost everyone wants world peace. Let's also admit that one powerful constituency in our midst represents an exception: the wealthy, who are hurt far more by a little extra inflation than by a little extra unemployment and thus flex their muscle (via the bond markets) in favor of the latter. Whether you're a cheerleader for growth or one of its secret opponents, the case against the Fed still comes down to two questions. First, in the short term, is there enough slack in the economy to allow the Fed to boost spending and increase output and employment without triggering an inflationary spiral? Second, is there reason over the long term to think our economy can "sustainably" grow faster than 2 to 2.5 percent yearly—that is, without risking an outsized inflation that can be exorcised only by a repeat of the bruising recession the Fed put us through in the early 1980s?

The unhappy answer, for someone like me who's dissatisfied with our economic performance, is that the Fed demonizers are mostly wrong: they overstate their case and are often incoherent in their arguments. This means we'll have to look somewhere other than the Fed to solve the wage stagnation and growing inequality that plague us.

To see why, take the short-term complaint first. For all their squabbles, economists generally agree that there's a rate of unemployment beneath which we can go only at the risk of accelerating inflation. They call this, with typical lyricism, the "non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment," or NAIRU. Think of it as a way for the dismal science to avoid saying explicitly that a certain level of human misery is "natural." The intuition behind it is straightforward. Workers lose jobs or enter the market where suitable new work is unavailable; because it takes time, training and even relocation to find their next opportunities, they may remain unemployed for months. Pumping the economy beyond such "normal" levels of slack has proven to be a reliable predictor of inflation for twenty years, as the proverbial situation of "too much money chasing too few goods" translates into price hikes. Alan Blinder, the former Fed vice chairman who recently returned to Princeton, calls the NAIRU theory the "clean little secret of macroeconomics."

Economists peg the NAIRU today at between 5.5 and 6 percent. With unemployment now at 5.5 percent (down from 7.4 percent in 1992), there's little reason to hope for bold new progress. It's true that some economists debate whether the NAIRU is really 5.5 or a little less. And getting the rate down another half a point means jobs for 600,000 more people. There's a case to be made, therefore, that the Fed could probe a little further, inching down interest rates to see what happens.

But here's the point: saying we might be able to get a fraction of a percent more jobs today is different from implying we can stamp out unemployment. It's also different from saying the economy can grow at 3 or 4 percent in perpetuity, as the growth propagandists urge. Even today's Fed bashers acknowledge there's a limit to how far you can push down unemployment without fueling inflation; they simply argue, without specifics, that it's lower than we think. But, as Stanford University's Paul Krugman points out, acknowledging this limit means conceding that the extra growth they're screaming for can only last a year or two at best.

Why? For the last two decades (in another empirical relationship so sturdy it's called Okun's Law), every percentage point the economy has grown annually beyond 2.5 percent has reduced the unemployment rate by half a point. You can get higher growth for a while when you're starting from the bottom, say, of the Reagan recession, with its 10.7 percent jobless rate. But, even if the non-inflationary level of unemployment is as low as 4.5 percent, getting there from today's 5.5 percent would give you just two years of 3.5 percent growth. That's it. To believe that you can grow this fast in perpetuity, you'd have to believe we can get unemployment down to an unprecedented 3 percent five years from now or toward zero (and beyond!) after a decade. It's just not credible.

To be sure, even a year or two of an extra point of growth is nothing to sneeze at; I'll take a $70 billion lift in

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ARE THE BENEFITS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION WORTH THE COSTS?

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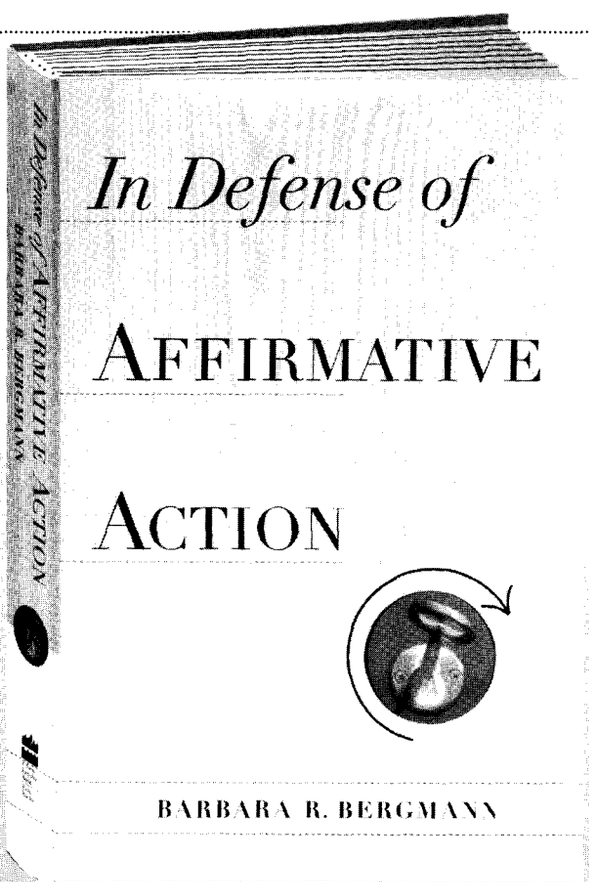

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GDP wherever we can find it. But the truth is that short-term demand management by the Fed can't deliver millions of new jobs, nor bring us anywhere close to our golden days of growth or the booms enjoyed by the Asian "tigers" today. Which brings us to the long-term question: Can anything get us back to those glory days?

The economy's long-run potential rate of growth is a function of two things: the growth of the labor force and the growth in productivity (or output per worker). Arguments about growth have to work through one or both of these factors to be credible. Growth was faster in the 1960s, for example, because our working-age population was growing more rapidly, women were joining the workforce, and productivity was rising at more than 2 percent yearly. Countries like Taiwan and Indonesia grow at enviable rates today for similar reasons.

Here, however, things have changed. American women have completed their historic transition toward work outside the home; their labor force participation rate of 38 percent in 1960 has expanded and finally stabilized at 58 percent in the 1990s. Along with a post-baby boom drop in fertility rates, this helps explain why our labor force overall now grows at just over 1 percent a year. The great but mysterious post-1973 productivity slowdown, meanwhile, has left annual output per worker rising at a little over 1 percent as well. Together, these rates produce today's "gloomy" view of potential growth of 2.2 to 2.5 percent. It's not rocket science or conspiracy. It's math.

And it isn't just theory. In 1994, for example, still coming back from recession, the economy grew at 3.5 percent. As Alan Greenspan testified in February, if 3.5 percent was the true rate of increase in the economy's long-run capacity, we should have seen no change in the economy's unused resources, or "slack," over that year. Instead, the "slack" tightened: measures of capacity use rose by 3 percent, and the unemployment rate dropped a full point. Greenspan correctly noted other signs of strain as well: deliveries of materials slowed, for example, and factory overtime rose.

Asking the Fed to pump aggregate spending or demand beyond the economy's potential growth rate is a recipe for systemic inflation. That doesn't mean we shouldn't try to raise potential growth through improving our infrastructure or investing more in research and development; indeed, the search for productivity-boosting strategies is the heart of what economic policy debate should be about. But monetary policy is only one piece of economic policy. Its aim should be to promote a sustainable growth (and jobs) trajectory that avoids the kind of price spiral that takes a costly recession to excise.

In the face of this analysis—offered by such Democratic economists as Krugman, former Carter Council of Economic Advisers chairman Charles Schultze and Alan Blinder, whose agreement with Greenspan on these matters got lost in the media hype over their supposed differences—how does the growth chorus respond? Basically with a grab bag of sophistries. Since they sound good the first time you hear them, it's worth shooting down the big ones.

Inflation is really lower. Lester Thurow argues in the current *American Prospect* that "inflation itself has already ended," citing, among other things, Alan Greenspan's own assertions that the Consumer Price Index may overstate price hikes by up to 1.5 percent. With the official CPI coming in at 2.5 percent last year, he says, "real" inflation may be only 1 percent, so it's time the Fed stopped worrying and stepped on the gas pedal.

There's only one problem. If inflation is overstated, then economic growth is already a lot higher, since it's calculated by subtracting out inflation from observed nominal growth. On Thurow's logic, we're already growing at 4 percent, so what's his beef? Of course, at other times Thurow is happy to use the overstated CPI to argue that real wages are falling. It's hard to avoid the conclusion that he's trying to have it both ways—the telltale sign of a propagandist.

Productivity is really higher. Felix Rohaytn and assorted CEOs say productivity growth is higher than the official measure of 1 percent or so, meaning the potential growth the Fed is targeting is too low. The trouble with this argument is its reliance on anecdotes from manufacturing firms, like the kind Rohaytn advises. It's true that manufacturing productivity has undergone a resurgence, growing at 3.5 percent yearly since early 1993. But manufacturing only represents 20 percent of the economy.

Wages are falling. Thurow rightly argues that you can't possibly have an inflationary threat if it's not translated into higher wages. But economy-wide wages are actually rising 2 to 3 percent yearly. Yes, some people's wages, particularly those with less education, are falling, and we urgently need to figure out how to reverse this. But, again, that's not an argument that inflation is dead.

Divine intervention. "Suppose God came to the Pentagon and said, 'There's never going to be another war,' " Thurow said to me. "You think the generals would tell us? Now suppose God came to Alan Greenspan and said, 'There's never going to be inflation again.' The head of the Federal Reserve Board will never declare victory on inflation." Thurow may be right there. And the oath Greenspan takes before testifying may not be enough to smoke him out. But for now I'm comfortable leaving that between Greenspan and the Big Central Banker upstairs. The Fed's institutional interest in inflation-busting isn't proof that the Fed is lying.

Saying the Fed can't solve our growth problems doesn't equal complacency about lousy economic performance. It simply means that scapegoating the Fed is a feel-good diversion from the tougher search for policies—fixing our schools, funding new technologies, raising savings and investment—that would actually boost productivity, wages and long-term growth. Let's agree that Greenspan and Company could usefully probe for a few hundred thousand more jobs. Then let's get back to the real work. •

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SURROGATES

By Michael Lewis

April 19:

I leave my hotel earlier than I need to and walk down from the Washington Monument to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Even at 7:30 a.m. the Mall is nearly deserted, the Lincoln Memorial empty. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, on the other hand, is teeming with people who appear to have been up for hours, walking slowly along the length of the black marble slab bearing the names of the dead. For the next twenty minutes I sit on a bench dodging bird droppings and waiting for Senator John McCain, who has agreed to meet me here. In my attempts to spot him at a distance I can't help but notice how differently ordinary people behave from politicians. Maybe fifty likely candidates pass through my line of vision, and not one of them could pass for a U.S. senator at 100 paces. They comb their hair in public, scratch themselves, hold hands.

At eight on the button McCain appears at my side, looking very senatorial except for a pair of outrageously wide black aviator sunglasses with some undignified name—Hobbie? Hippo?—stenciled on the earpiece. He takes the seat on the bench beside me, and for a brief moment I feel I am in one of those movies about Washington in which the clueless protagonist gleans some crucial piece of information from the terrified insider, who is constantly glancing over his shoulder. Except that there is no single piece of information I know enough to seek, and McCain long ago decided he was going to be seen with whomever he pleases.

The campaign has moved into the legislature. Except for a handful of tactical speeches and photos, the candidates will shape public opinion of themselves on the job. The net effect of this is to turn up the heat on the Hill, and senators with nerve are going to exploit the moment. In a couple of weeks, for instance, McCain will rise on the Senate floor and attach his campaign finance reform bill to some unrelated piece of legislation. This will embarrass Bob Dole, who will be forced to fight reform.

What makes this so interesting is that McCain is the Dole surrogate most in demand as a speaker around the country—and it's not hard to see why. Few Republicans seem to care about the differences between the two men—though they might soon care more. For the moment what matters most to the people who wish to see McCain speak for Dole is the formative experience that the two senators ostensibly share: both nearly died in a war, both endured indescribable pain and suffering. Dole's ordeal is at the center of his national campaign—to some extent it *is* his campaign. McCain's trials are less known. On October 26, 1967, when he ejected out of his Navy jet and into a North Vietnamese mob, McCain suffered two broken arms, a shattered knee and shoulder and bayonet wounds in his ankle and groin. Robert Timberg's gripping book, *The Nightingale's Song*, depicts McCain two months later, in his first prison cell:

> McCain weighed less than one hundred pounds. His hair, flecked with gray since high school, was nearly snow-white. Clots of food clung to his face, neck, hair and beard. His cheeks were sunken, his neck chickenlike, his legs atrophied. His knee bore a fresh surgical slash, his ankle an angry scar from the bayonet wound. His right arm, little more than skin and bone, protruded like a stick. But it was McCain's eyes that riveted [his cellmate George] Day. "His eyes, I'll never forget, were just burning bright. They were bug-eyed like you see in those pictures from the Jewish concentration camps. His eyes were real pop-eyed like that. I said, 'the gooks have dumped this guy on us so they can blame us for killing him,' because I didn't think he was going to live out the day."

McCain survived in captivity without medical treatment for the next five years, enduring torture so exquisite that even to read about it causes sweat to pop out on your brow: his captors would hang him by his broken arms from dangling ropes for hours on end, for instance. But the astonishing part of McCain's experience was its voluntary aspect. McCain is the third generation of a distinguished military family; his father was an admiral during the Vietnam War. The North Vietnamese hoped that this famous prisoner of war would violate U.S. military policy, which dictated that prisoners be returned in the order they arrived. In accepting their offer of freedom McCain would testify to the demoralization of American troops. For five and a half years his captors tried to torture him into going home. For five and a half years he refused to go.

As McCain reminisces, I realize I have made a tactical mistake. I am in the wrong place at the wrong time. I had hoped to talk to McCain about his relationship to Dole—and especially his plans to saddle Dole with a

continued on page 26

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campaign finance reform bill. But it feels obscene to talk about such things in such places. My blunder is what the speculator George Soros calls a fertile fallacy, however. All by himself McCain is leading the conversation in a direction well worth following.

We walk alongside the black granite slab against the oncoming traffic, then back again. The tourists pass us, stopping to get the feel of the place and to read the names. One sign of the memorial's success, I say, is that it has followed a path similar to those it seeks to commemorate. Like the veterans themselves, it has gone from being feared and loathed to being widely revered. The Park Service says the memorial has become the second most frequently visited site in Washington, after the Capitol. McCain admits that at first he found it depressing and even faintly antagonistic. But one day he was passing through on his own—he visits often by himself—and discovered a couple of veterans running their hands across the inscribed names. Clearly the two men had never met before, but they had fallen into conversation, swapped war stories and in a few minutes were clutching each other and weeping. "If that kind of healing goes on," says McCain, "well, then it's a good thing."

JOHN McCAIN BY TAYLOR JONES FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Someone once said that an explanation is where the mind comes to rest. There is a feeling about McCain—one that seems lacking in Dole—that he has somehow explained his own experience to himself. He has assimilated his trauma differently than the candidate he's behind. "This is the McCain theory—and I think it's valid," he says. "I was an adult when I was shot down—31 years old. I'd had a whole life. He was 19. What were you like when you were 19? I believe that everything Bob Dole has done since the war was dictated by that experience." The Vietnam veteran has achieved the kind of equanimity that is supposed to be vouchsafed only to veterans of good wars. When Clinton arrived at the White House, for instance, McCain sent him a note saying that any time the president wished to walk down to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial the senator from Arizona would be glad to walk alongside him. Clinton sent back a nice note.

Recalling this exchange causes McCain to break his rhythm. We are walking back toward the bench, and McCain is limping slightly, like a high-school football star. He is remembering something else. "I don't know if you want to write about this," he begins. "Back in the mid 1980s a guy who protested the war came into my office. He said his name was David Ifshin."

In December 1970 David Ifshin had led a group of American students to Hanoi, where he delivered an anti-war radio address to American soldiers engaged in attacks on North Vietnam. Like other anti-American propaganda, his program was piped into McCain's prison cell from six in the morning until nine at night. But McCain, who can generate anger in a heartbeat, shows not the faintest trace of resentment. "Ifshin stood in my office," he explains, "and he said, 'I came here to tell you that I made a mistake. I was wrong, and I'm sorry.' And I said to him, 'Look, I accept your apology. We'll be friends. But more importantly I want *you* to forget it. Go on with your life. You cannot look back.' "

Here he pauses, and I figure he's finished. But he's groping behind his aviator sunglasses for the point of his anecdote—that forgiveness is ultimately less self-destructive than the bitter desire for vengeance. Or perhaps that there is no such thing as vengeance. Five months ago David Ifshin was diagnosed with cancer. The cancer has proved untreatable and has spread rapidly. David Ifshin is now dying. He is 47 years old and has a wife and three young children. "When I heard about it," says McCain, "it did pass through my mind: *Suppose I had told David Ifshin to get the hell out of my office. How would I feel about myself now?*"

April 23:

I'm walking out the door of my Washington apartment on my way to find David Ifshin when John McCain calls. I've made the mistake of telling his press secretary

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what I'm up to, and she's passed it along to the senator, who is seriously concerned. "Look, I don't mean to insult you," he says, "but be careful with this. If you wrote anything that hurt David or Gail or the kids—the Ifshins have three young children—I'd never forgive myself. I'd forgive you, but I wouldn't forgive myself."

It's a half-hour drive out of Washington to the Ifshins' house in the Maryland suburbs, where I find a gaunt bearded man stretched out on a patio lounge chair, attended by his wife, Gail. This afternoon he is tired, and his voice is barely audible as he sketches his political career.

The cover of *Life* magazine of April 23, 1971, shows David Ifshin, aged 22, at a war rally, wearing a collegiate goatee. He's standing directly behind Jane Fonda, who has her fist raised. After his war protests he worked on a kibbutz; but when he returned to America he also returned to national politics. He went on to work on the Mondale campaign and, to a storm of protest, was even tapped to head the Dukakis transition team. He spent ten years as general counsel to AIPAC. He had met Clinton briefly in 1972; twenty years later, when Clinton ran for president, Ifshin became general counsel for his campaign. Before he accepted the job, he told Clinton he'd been attacked for his war record each time he'd joined a presidential campaign. "I brought it up with Clinton deliberately," he says, "and he said he knew what I had done and admired it then. And that he still admired it now."

The past is especially stubborn these days, and Ifshin's work with Clinton is still landing him in the news. He makes an important cameo appearance in *Blood Sport*, for instance, James B. Stewart's book about the Whitewater scandal. "Get the facts, get them out, and get it over in a single day," he tells Mickey Kantor on page 210, when the story first breaks in *The New York Times*. Kantor first agrees to send a team of lawyers down to Little Rock and get to the bottom of the thing. But later—presumably after speaking with the Clintons—Kantor changes his mind. "If you don't level with them," Ifshin tells Kantor prophetically, "you'll wind up with a special prosecutor."

Having broken with the campaign, he is now back in touch with the candidate, who calls Ifshin two or three times each week, even when he's traveling. A few months ago the Ifshin family—David, Gail and their three children—spent the night in the Lincoln bedroom. In the pictures of Clinton playing with the children the president's ruddy good health seems almost obscene beside Ifshin's drawn face. Yet, when I called, David Ifshin did not hesitate to rise to the occasion. "I'm very proud of this story," he says, "and it's never been written." I ask him about his feelings toward McCain. "One of our true political heroes," he says. "He's a giant."

Ifshin's version of their story differs from McCain's in its important details and in its spirit. The way McCain tells it, Ifshin is the hero: he decided he'd made a mistake and bravely took responsibility for his actions. The way Ifshin tells it, McCain is the hero. As I listen to him I realize that this is the reverse of the usual Washington investigation, in which the reporter visits each interested party to collect the dirt on the adversary. Here is a case where each is needed to explain the other's nobility of spirit. I have never heard two political allies, much less two political opponents, cast each other in a more flattering light.

"I had always wanted to apologize," Ifshin begins, "but did not know who to apologize to." His moment to act, he decided, came at an AIPAC meeting around 1986 at the Washington Hilton. Ifshin spotted Senator John McCain at a distance and decided that he was the man who deserved the apology. "I hoisted my courage up and went over to him," recalls Ifshin, "and before I could get a word out [McCain] said, 'I owe you an apology.' " A couple of years earlier, during the 1984 presidential campaign, McCain had given a speech in which he attacked Ifshin's war record. "Basically someone had handed him a script," said Ifshin, "and he read it. He was sorry he did it and said he wouldn't do that kind of thing again. Then he asked me to stop by his office, which I did. And normally wouldn't do. It was blind fate, I told him at that time. I said, 'I owed you an apology, and you robbed me of the chance to make it'—and he was characteristically modest and humble about it." Later that year McCain and Ifshin, together with a Vietnamese émigré named Doan Van Toai, established the Institute For Democracy in Vietnam.

Ifshin shifts painfully in his chair and stops to catch his breath. It was at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial that what he calls "the second half of the story" with McCain began. On Memorial Day of 1993 Clinton spoke at the site. Both McCain and Ifshin were present. Clinton was cheered loudly. He was also heckled. And one of the hecklers waved a sign that said: "TELL US ABOUT IFSHIN."

Four weeks later Ifshin found himself on a flight to Washington with McCain, who motioned for him to take the seat beside him. "He asked why I hadn't taken a job in the administration. I said this and that. We played twenty questions until finally he said, 'It's because of that stupid sign isn't it?' And I said, 'Yes, partly, it was.' And he said, 'Come to my office tomorrow morning and we'll settle this thing once and for all.' "

The next day, June 30, 1993, David Ifshin turned up in John McCain's office in the Russell Senate Office Building to find that the senator had drafted a letter, which he entered later that day in the Congressional Record. It began by praising Clinton's Memorial Day address on behalf of Vietnam's veterans. The veterans, McCain wrote, "were very impressed by [Clinton's] determination to offer an eloquent tribute to their service when it would have been far easier for him to have avoided the event altogether." He decried the behavior of the protesters. Then he moved on:

> Among the demonstrators that day, one individual held a sign which asked the president to explain his association with a person known to many of our colleagues, Mr. David Ifshin. "TELL US ABOUT IFSHIN," it read. My other purpose in speaking today is to do just that: I want to talk about David Ifshin. David Ifshin is my friend.... •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Spring Roundup

Jane Eyre (Miramax). She's back. For (at least) her third screen appearance. And she still has the same problem. The Brontë novel, so think many of us, has a plot that is absolutely absurd, but it has considerable texture in the quality of the narrator, Jane. A film version, by its very nature, emphasizes the plot and cannot do nearly as well with the interior Jane, so the book's weaker qualities are underscored. Just two instances: Brontë not only gets rid of the encumbrance to Jane's marriage, the surviving mad wife, just when it's helpful, she also conveniently drops a large fortune on our heroine—and all this without much insight (on screen) into the Jane to whom all this is happening.

Franco Zeffirelli directed this version and surprises us: instead of lavishing his usual garishness on the picture, he has made it visually dull. Charlotte Gainsbourg is Jane and presents a nicely contained, self-reliant young woman, though not exactly an appealing one. The Rochester this time is William Hurt, whose voice is improving but who is too much a modern neurotic, not a romantic loner. (This is an Alan Rickman role.) As the housekeeper, Mrs. Fairfax, Joan Plowright continues in her latter-day occupation—biddying along.

Mrs. Winterbourne (TriStar). Shirley MacLaine continues *her* latter-day career—as a semi-tough, heart-of-gold, sagacious domestic empress. Here she plays the matriarch of a very rich Boston family who, before she married her (late) husband, was a Broadway show girl and has not lost her sardonic wisdom. MacLaine does a pleasing job—all the more pleasing in that we can see MacLaine the actress refusing to quit, coming out for still one more round. May there be more.

The screenplay by Phoef Sutton and Lisa-Maria Radano, based on a Cornell Woolrich novel, is respectful of its elders. It tips its hat to a number of predecessors, from the relatively recent *While You Were Sleeping* back to *It Started with Eve* (1941) with Deanna Durbin and Charles Laughton (with Laughton in the "MacLaine" role). The basic plot element is that a young woman is welcomed by a family as the beloved of a young member of the family though this is not, at the start, true. It helps the plot if the young woman is poor and the family well-off. The basic difficulty is how to keep the young woman likable even though she delays telling the truth about herself.

It's especially difficult here because this time she's played by a talk-show host named Ricki Lake who looks like a diminutive football player in drag and has the talent to match. But the film may turn out to be memorable because it gives Brendan Fraser his first truly effective role. Here he suggests Robert Montgomery, the debonair charmer and skillful light comedian of the '30s and '40s. Montgomery later tried his hand at darker roles, as Fraser may, too, but in the lighter ones Montgomery could always rely on our chuckling along with him, and Fraser has much the same gift.

The Monster (Cinepix). One way for a depressing farce to be even more depressing is for it to be in a foreign language with subtitles. The Italian comic Roberto Benigni showed in two Jim Jarmusch films that he is deft, and he showed something more than that in Fellini's last film, *Voices of the Moon*. But his judgment of material for himself is presumably based on one demand only: that it give him a lot to do. In *Johnny Stecchino* and in this latest item, he does have a lot to do, but one dreary embarrassment leads to another, for 111 minutes.

Benigni plays a Roman nerd who, through a series of freakish accidents, gets a reputation as a serial killer, and then undergoes further accidents to keep the reputation growing. A female detective manages to rent a room in his apartment in order to keep an eye on him. More accidents, of course. We wouldn't care about the credibility if only, once or twice along the way, something was amusing. But *The Monster* is a prime example of a genre that's been around for a long, long time: the broad comedy that is strictly for domestic consumption, based on data and devices that are appreciated at home. Many countries have considerable histories in this line and have wisely kept most of these pictures to themselves. *The Monster* slipped through.

The Last Supper (Sony). Loathsome. Particularly loathsome because it thinks it's a bold intellectual venture out of the commercial mainstream, which will appeal to us superior types.

Five graduate students, two of them female, one of the three males black, all of them liberals, share a house in Ames,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Fargo. *The Coen brothers have at last and at least made half a good picture. In this wobbly murder-farce, the story of the pregnant police chief is funny. (Reviewed 3/25/96)* **Denise Calls Up.** *Seven New Yorkers carry on life and love, convey good news and bad news, entirely (almost) by telephone and answering machine. A neat trick. (5/6/96)* **Flirting with Disaster.** *A small miracle of lightness and laughter. David O. Russell's script and directing, with this wacky tale of a young man's search for his biological parents, go to the head of the class—with a gold star. (4/22/96)* **I Shot Andy Warhol.** *The 1960s redux. Atmosphere, pathos, bitterness, in this recounting of the life of the mad Valerie Solanas. Virtuosic work by the writer-director Mary Harron. (5/6/96)*—**SK**

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Iowa, home of Iowa State. (Do grad students in Ames really have such luxurious homes?) One evening they invite a truck driver to stay for dinner after he does them a favor. During the meal, this man, an ex-Marine, reveals his hatred of intellectuals, liberals particularly, his belief in militaristic ideas, his bigotries. Violence erupts, and, to save one of the group, another one kills the rightist. Instead of telling the police, they bury him in the backyard. And nothing happens to them.

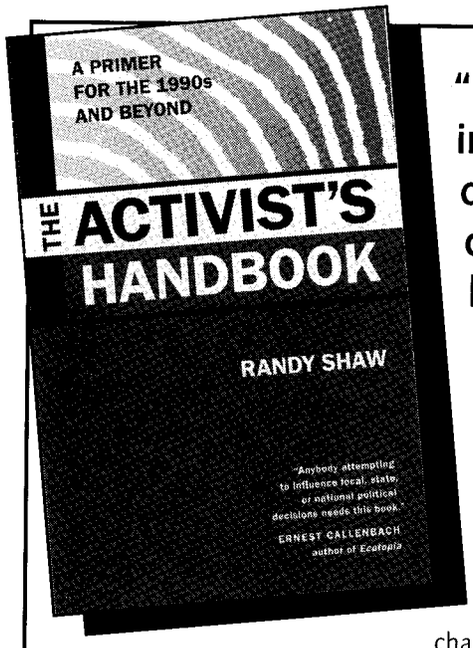
So they embark on other similar erasures: an anti-abortion, anti-gay priest and a Farrakhan-like black man among them. They then invite a right-wing TV talker, who turns the tables on them. (Very soon after the picture begins, we wonder how it's going to end—how it's going to get out of its complications. There's a drastic finale.)

The screenplay, by Dan Rosen, supposedly dares to take on deep subjects in a vein of sardonic humor. But what it says is that liberals, because of their beliefs, have the right to pass death sentences on opponents. The group's mantra is a party-game moral dilemma: If you had met Hitler in 1909, and knew what he was going to do, wouldn't you poison him? The mantra flops in two ways. Unlike most such party posers, it has no link with reality: How could you possibly have known what lay ahead of Hitler? Second, this group knows no such vastly horrible future about any of the people they kill: each is just a soldier in the ranks of rightism. (Although, to make us feel a wee bit better, Rosen later lets us know that the truck driver was a child rapist and murderer.)

In *Arsenic and Old Lace* the two elderly sisters who murdered guests for their own good were at least daffy. These students are supposed to be ultra-rational. Well, perhaps we're being shown the dangers of ultra-rationality—which is a quasi-rightist tenet. The director of record, but of not much else, was Stacy Title.

Under the Domim Tree (Strand). An Israeli film, set in one of the camps established in Israel in the 1950s to shelter orphans who survived the camps. Based on an autobiographical novel by Gila Almagor, the various plot strands dealing with the adolescent girls in one of those camps are probably factual, and probably every one of those stories happened many times with slight variations. However, as treated in this screenplay by Almagor and Eyal Sher, they seem a touch consciously theatrical. Once again, harsh truth, intended to be truthful, loses some of its verity in the hands of lesser craftsmen.

But the cast is first-rate. Every one of the dozen or so girls, as directed by Eli Cohen, is whole, very affectingly the person she is supposed to be. The acting is fresher than the script. •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Money, time, and the surrender of American taste.

Les Très Riches Heures de Martha Stewart

BY MARGARET TALBOT

Every age gets the household goddess it deserves. The '60s had Julia Child, the sophisticated French chef who proved as permissive as Dr. Spock. She may have proselytized for a refined foreign cuisine from her perch at a Boston PBS station, but she was always an anti-snob, vowing to "take a lot of the la dee dah out of French cooking." With her madras shirts and her penumbra of curls, her 6'2" frame and her whinny of a voice, she exuded an air of Cambridge eccentricity—faintly bohemian and a little tatty, like a yellowing travel poster. She was messy and forgiving. When Julia dropped an egg or collapsed a soufflé, she shrugged and laughed. "You are alone in the kitchen, nobody can see you, and cooking is meant to be fun," she reminded her viewers. She wielded lethal-looking kitchen knives with campy abandon, dipped her fingers into crème anglaise and wiped her chocolate-smeared hands on an apron tied carelessly at her waist. For Child was also something of a sensualist, a celebrant of appetite as much as a pedant of cooking.

In the '90s, and probably well into the next century, we have Martha Stewart, corporate overachiever turned domestic superachiever, Mildred Pierce in earth-toned Armani. Martha is the anti-Julia. Consider the extent of their respective powers. At the height of her success, Child could boast a clutch of bestselling cookbooks and a *gemütlich* TV show shot on a single set. At what may or may not be the height of her success, here's what Stewart can claim: a 5-year-old magazine, *Martha Stewart Living*, with a circulation that has leapt to 1.5 million; a popular cable TV show, also called "Martha Stewart Living" and filmed at her luscious Connecticut and East Hampton estates; a dozen wildly successful gardening, cooking and lifestyle books; a mail-order business, Martha-by-Mail; a nationally syndicated newspaper column, "Ask Martha"; a regular Wednesday slot on the "Today" show; a line of $110-a-gallon paints in colors inspired by the eggs her Araucana hens lay; plans to invade cyberspace—in short, an empire.

Julia limited herself to cooking lessons, with the quiet implication that cooking was a kind of synecdoche for the rest of bourgeois existence; but Martha's parish is vaster, her field is all of life. Her expertise, as she recently explained to *Mediaweek* magazine, covers, quite simply, "Beautiful soups and how to make them, beautiful houses and how to build them, beautiful children and how to raise them." (From soups to little nuts.) She presides, in fact, over a phenomenon that, in other realms, is quite familiar in American society and culture: a cult, devoted to her name and image.

The Best of Martha Stewart Living: What to Have for Dinner
(Time Warner, 143 pp., $20)

Special Occasions: The Best of Martha Stewart Living
(Clarkson Potter, 144 pp., $18)

Martha Stewart's Menus for Entertaining
(Clarkson Potter, 224 pp., $30)

Martha Stewart's New Old House
(Clarkson Potter, 288 pp., $45)

Martha Stewart's Gardening
(Clarkson Potter, 360 pp., $50)

The Wedding Planner
by Martha Stewart
(Clarkson Potter, $37.50)

Martha Stewart's Hors D'Oeuvres
(Clarkson Potter, 165 pp., $18)

In the distance between these two cynosures of domestic life lies a question: What does the cult of Martha mean? Or, to put it another way, what have we done, exactly, to deserve her?

If you have read the paper or turned on the television in the last year or so, you have probably caught a glimpse of the WASPy good looks, the affectless demeanor, the nacreous perfection of her world. You may even know the outlines of her story. Middle-class girl from a Polish-American family in Nutley, New Jersey, works her way through Barnard in the early '60s, modeling on the side. She becomes a stockbroker, a self-described workaholic and insomniac who by the '70s is making six figures on Wall Street, and who then boldly trades it all in ... for life as a workaholic, insomniac evangelist for domesticity whose business now generates some $200 million in profits a year. (She herself, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, makes a salary of $400,000 a year from Time Inc., which generously supplements this figure with a $40,000 a year clothing allowance and other candies.) You may even have admired her magazine, with its art-book production values and spare design, every kitchen utensil photographed like an Imogen Cunningham nude, every plum or pepper rendered with the loving detail of an eighteenth-century botanical drawing, every page a gentle exhalation of High Class.

What you may not quite realize, if you have not delved deeper into Stewart's oeuvre, is the ambition of her design for living—the absurd, self-parodic dream of it. To read Martha Stewart is to know that there is no corner of your domestic life that cannot be beautified or improved under careful tutelage, none that should not be colonized by the rhetoric and the discipline of quality control. Work full time though you may, care for your family though you must, convenience should never be your watchword in what Stewart likes to call, in her own twee coinage, "homekeeping." Convenience is the enemy of excellence. "We do not pretend that these are 'convenience' foods," she writes loftily of the bread and preserves recipes in a 1991 issue of the magazine. "Some take days to make. But they are recipes that will produce the very best results, and we know that is what you want." Martha is a kitchen-sink idealist. She scorns utility in the name of beauty. But her idealism, of course, extends no further than surface appearances, which makes it a very particular form of idealism indeed.

To spend any length of time in Marthaland is to realize that it is not enough to serve your guests homemade pumpkin soup as a first course. You must present it in hollowed-out, hand-gilded pumpkins as well. It will not do to serve an Easter ham unless you have baked it in a roast-

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ing pan lined with, of all things, "tender, young, organically-grown grass that has not yet been cut." And, when serving a "casual" lobster and corn dinner al fresco, you really ought to fashion dozens of cunning little bamboo brushes tied with raffia and adorned with a chive so that each of your guests may butter their corn with something pretty.

To be a Martha fan (or more precisely, a Martha adept) is to understand that a terracotta pot is just a terracotta pot until you have "aged" it, painstakingly rubbing yogurt into its dampened sides, then smearing it with plant food or "something you found in the woods" and patiently standing by while the mold sprouts. It is to think that maybe you could do this *kind* of thing, anyway—start a garden, say, in your scruffy backyard—and then to be brought up short by Martha's enumeration, in *Martha Stewart's Gardening*, of forty-nine "essential" gardening tools. These range from a "polesaw" to a "corn fiber broom" to three different kinds of pruning shears, one of which—the "loppers"—Martha says she has in three different sizes. You have, perhaps, a trowel. But then Martha's garden is a daunting thing to contemplate, what with its topiary mazes and state-of-the-art chicken coop; its "antique" flowers and geometric herb garden. It's half USDA station, half Sissinghurst. And you cannot imagine making anything remotely like it at your own house, not without legions of artisans and laborers and graduate students in landscape design, and a pot of money that perhaps you'll unearth when you dig up the yard.

In *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch describes the ways in which pleasure, in our age, has taken on "the qualities of work," allowing our leisure-time activities to be measured by the same standards of accomplishment that rule the workplace. It is a phenomenon that he memorably characterizes as "the invasion of play by the rhetoric of achievement." For Lasch, writing in the early '70s, the proliferation of sex-advice manuals offered a particularly poignant example. Today, though, you might just as easily point to the hundreds of products and texts, from unctuous home-furnishings catalogs to upscale "shelter" magazines to self-help books like *Meditations for Women Who Do Too Much*, that tell us exactly how to "nest" and "cocoon" and "nurture," how to "center" and "retreat," and how to measure our success at these eminently private pursuits. Just as late-nineteenth-century marketers and experts promised to bring Americans back in touch with the nature from which modern industrial life had alienated them, so today's "shelter" experts—the word is revealingly primal—promise to reconnect us with a similarly mystified home. The bourgeois home as lost paradise, retrievable through careful instruction.

Martha Stewart is the apotheosis of this particular cult of expertise, and its most resourceful entrepreneur. She imagines projects of which we would never have thought—gathering dewy grass for our Easter ham, say—and makes us feel the pressing need for training in them. And she exploits, brilliantly, a certain estrangement from home that many working women feel these days. For women who are working longer and longer hours at more and more demanding jobs, it's easy to think of home as the place where chaos reigns and their own competence is called into doubt; easy to regard the office, by comparison, as the bulwark of order. It is a reversal, of course, of the hoary concept of home as a refuge from the tempests of the marketplace. But these days, as the female executives in a recent study attested, the priority they most often let slide is housekeeping; they'll abide disorder at home that they wouldn't or couldn't abide at the office. No working couple's home is the oasis of tranquility and Italian marble countertops that Marthaism seems to promise. But could it be? Should it be?

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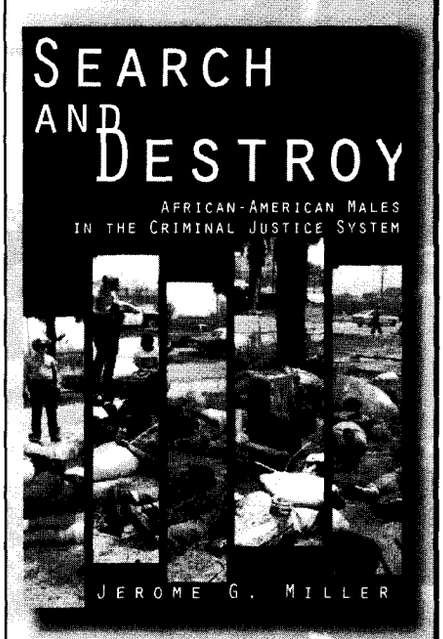

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Stewart plucks expertly at that chord of doubt.

In an era when it is not at all uncommon to be cut off from the traditional sources of motherwit and household lore—when many of us live far from the families into which we were born and have started our own families too late to benefit from the guidance of living parents or grandparents—domestic pedants like Martha Stewart rightly sense a big vacuum to fill. Stewart's books are saturated with nostalgia for lost tradition and old moldings, for her childhood in Nutley and for her mother's homemade preserves. In the magazine, her "Remembering" column pines moralistically for a simpler era, when beach vacations meant no television or video games, just digging for clams and napping in hammocks. Yet Stewart's message is that such simplicity can only be achieved now through strenuous effort and a flood of advice. We might be able to put on a picnic or a dinner party without her help, she seems to tell us, but we wouldn't do it properly, beautifully, in the spirit of excellence that we expect of ourselves at work.

It may be that Stewart's special appeal is to women who wouldn't want to take their mother's word anyway, to baby-boomer daughters who figure that their sensibilities are just too different from their stay-at-home moms', who can't throw themselves into housekeeping without thinking of their kitchen as a catering business and their backyards as a garden show. In fact, relatively few of Martha's fans are housewives—72 percent of the subscribers to *Martha Stewart Living* are employed outside the home as managers or professionals—and many of them profess to admire her precisely because she isn't one, either. As one such Martha acolyte, an account executive at a Christian radio station, effused on the Internet: "[Stewart] is my favorite independent woman and what an entrepreneur! She's got her own television show, magazine, books and even her own brand of latex paint.... Martha is a feisty woman who settles for nothing less than perfection."

For women such as these, the didactic faux-maternalism of Martha Stewart seems the perfect answer. She may dispense the kind of homekeeping advice that a mother would, but she does so in tones too chill and exacting to sound "maternal," singling out, for example, those "who will always be too lazy" to do her projects. She makes housekeeping safe for the professional woman by professionalizing housekeeping. And you never forget that Stewart is herself a mogul, even when she's baking rhubarb crisp and telling you, in her Shakeresque mantra, that "It's a Good Thing."

MARTHA STEWART BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

It is tempting to see the Martha cult purely as a symptom of anti-feminist backlash. Though she may not directly admonish women to abandon careers for hearth and home, Stewart certainly exalts a way of life that puts hearth and home at its center, one that would be virtually impossible to achieve without *somebody's* full-time devotion. (Camille Paglia has praised her as "someone who has done a tremendous service for ordinary women—women who identify with the roles of wife, mother, and homemaker.") Besides, in those alarming moments when Stewart slips into the social critic's mode, she can sound a wee bit like Phyllis Schlafly—less punitive and more patrician, maybe, but just as smug about the moral uplift of a well-ordered home. Her philosophy of cultivating your own walled garden while the world outside is condemned to squalor bears the hallmarks of Reagan's America—it would not be overreading to call it a variety of conservatism. "Amid the horrors of genocidal war in Bosnia and Rwanda, the AIDS epidemic and increasing crime in many cities," Stewart writes in a recent column, "there are those of us who desire positive reinforcement of some very basic tenets of good living." And those would be? "Good food, gardening, crafts, entertaining and home improvement." (Hollow out the pumpkins, they're starving in Rwanda.)

Yet it would, in the end, be too simplistic to regard her as a tool of the feminine mystique, or as some sort of spokesmodel for full-time mommies. For one thing, there is nothing especially June Cleaver-ish, or even motherly, about Stewart. She has taken a drubbing, in fact, for looking more convincing as a businesswoman than a dispenser of milk and cookies. (Remember the apocryphal tale that had Martha flattening a crate of baby chicks while backing out of a driveway in her Mercedes?) Her habitual prickliness and Scotchguard perfectionism are more like the badges of the striving good girl, still cut to the quick by her classmates' razzing when she asked for extra homework.

Despite the ritual obeisance that Martha pays to Family, moreover, she is not remotely interested in the messy contingencies of family life. In the enchanted world of Turkey Hill, there are no husbands (Stewart was divorced from hers in 1990), only loyal craftsmen, who clip hedges and force dogwood with self-effacing dedication. Children she makes use of as accessories, much like Parisian women deploy little dogs. The books and especially the magazine are often graced with photographic spreads of parties and teas where children pale as waxen angels somberly disport themselves, their fair hair shaped into taste-

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ful blunt cuts, their slight figures clad in storybook velvet or lace. "If I had to choose one essential element for the success of an Easter brunch," she writes rather menacingly in her 1994 *Menus for Entertaining*, "it would be children." The homemade Halloween costumes modeled by wee lads and lasses in an October 1991 issue of *Martha Stewart Living* do look gorgeous—the Caravaggio colors, the themes drawn from nature. But it's kind of hard to imagine a 5-year-old boy happily agreeing to go as an acorn this year, instead of say, Batman. And why should he? In Marthaland, his boyhood would almost certainly be overridden in the name of taste.

If Stewart is a throwback, it's not so much to the 1950s as to the 1850s, when the doctrine of separate spheres did allow married or widowed women of the upper classes a kind of power—unchallenged dominion over the day-to-day functioning of the home and its servants, in exchange for ceding the public realm to men. At Turkey Hill, Stewart is the undisputed chatelaine, micromanaging her estate in splendid isolation. (This hermetic pastoral is slightly marred, of course, by the presence of cameras.) Here the domestic arts have become ends in themselves, unmoored from family values and indeed from family.

Stewart's peculiar brand of didacticism has another nineteenth-century precedent—in the domestic science or home economics movement. The domestic scientists' favorite recipes—"wholesome" concoctions of condensed milk and canned fruit, rivers of white sauce—would never have passed Martha's muster; but their commitment to painstakingly elegant presentation, their concern with the look of food even more than its taste, sound a lot like Stewart's. And, more importantly, so does their underlying philosophy. They emerged out of a tradition: the American preference for food writing of the prescriptive, not the descriptive, kind, for food books that told you, in M.F.K. Fisher's formulation, not about eating but about what to eat. But they took this spirit much further. Like Stewart, these brisk professional women of the 1880s and '90s believed that true culinary literacy could not be handed down or casually absorbed; it had to be carefully taught. (One of the movement's accomplishments, if it can be called that, was the home ec curriculum.)

Like Stewart, the domestic scientists were not bent on liberating intelligent women from housework. Their objective was to raise housework to a level worthy of intelligent women. They wished to apply rational method to the chaos and the drudgery of housework and, in so doing, to earn it the respect accorded men's stuff like science and business. Neither instinct, nor intuition, nor mother's rough-hewn words of advice would have a place in the scientifically managed home of the future. As Laura Shapiro observes in *Perfection Salad*, her lively and perceptive history of domestic science, the ideal new housewife was supposed to project, above all, "self-sufficiency, self-control, and a perfectly bland façade." Sound familiar?

It is in their understanding of gender roles, however, that the doyennes of home ec most closely prefigure Marthaism. Like Stewart, they cannot be classified either as feminists or traditionalists. Their model housewife was a pseudo-professional with little time for sublimating her ego to her husband's or tenderly ministering to his needs. She was more like a factory supervisor than either the Victorian angel of the home or what Shapiro calls the courtesan type, the postwar housewife who was supposed to zip through her chores so she could gussy herself up for her husband. In Martha's world, too, the managerial and aesthetic challenges of "homekeeping" always take priority, and their intricacy and ambition command a respect that mere wifely duties never could. Her husbandless hauteur is rich with the

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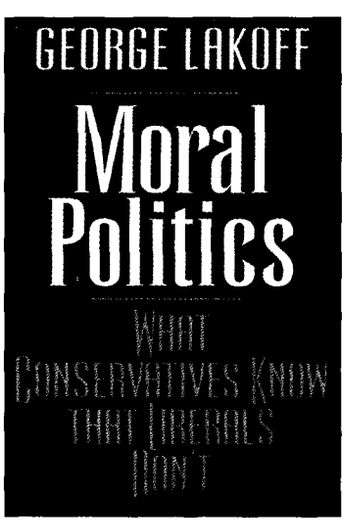

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self-satisfactions of financial and emotional independence.

In the end, Stewart's fantasies have as much to do with class as with gender. The professional women who read her books might find themselves longing for a breadwinner, but a lifestyle this beautiful is easier to come by if you've never needed a breadwinner in the first place. Stewart's books are a dreamy advertisement for independent wealth—or, more accurately, for its facsimile. You may not have a posh pedigree, but with a little effort (okay, a lot) you can adopt its trappings. After all, Martha wasn't born to wealth either, but now she attends the weddings of people with names like Charles Booth-Clibborn (she went to his in London, the magazine tells us) and caters them for couples named Sissy and Kelsey (see her *Wedding Planner*, in which their yacht is decorated with a "Just Married" sign).

She is not an American aristocrat, but she plays one on TV. And you can play one, too, at least in your own home. Insist on cultivating only those particular yellow plums you tasted in the Dordogne, buy your copper cleaner only at Delherin in Paris, host lawn parties where guests come "attired in the garden dress of the Victorian era," and you begin to simulate the luster of lineage. Some of Stewart's status-augmenting suggestions must strike even her most faithful fans as ridiculous. For showers held after the baby is born, Martha "likes presenting the infant with engraved calling cards that the child can then slip into thank you notes and such for years to come." What a great idea. Maybe your baby can gum them for a while first, thoughtfully imprinting them with his signature drool.

The book that best exemplifies her class-consciousness is *Martha Stewart's New Old House*, a step-by-step account of refurbishing a Federal-style farmhouse in Westport, Connecticut. Like all her books, it contains many, many pictures of Martha; here she's frequently shown supervising the work of plasterers, carpenters and other "seemingly taciturn men." *New Old House* establishes Stewart's ideal audience: a demographic niche occupied by the kind of people who, like her, can afford to do their kitchen countertops in "mottled, gray-green, handhoned slate from New York state, especially cut" for them. The cost of all this (and believe me, countertops are only the beginning) goes unmentioned. If you have to ask, maybe you're not a Martha kind of person after all.

In fact, Stewart never seems all that concerned with reassuring her readers of their ability to afford such luxuries or of their right to enjoy them. She's more concerned with establishing her own claims. Her reasoning seems to go something like this: the houses that she buys and renovates belong to wealthy families who passed them down through generations. But these families did not properly care for their patrimony. The widowed Bulkeley sisters, erstwhile owners of Turkey Hill, had let the estate fall "into great disrepair. All the farms and outbuildings were gone.... The fields around had been sold off by the sisters in 2-acre building lots; suburbia encroached." The owner of the eponymous New Old House was a retired librarian named Miss Adams who "had little interest in the house other than as a roof over her head. Clearly a frugal spirit, she had no plans to restore the house, and she lived there until she could no longer cope with the maintenance and upkeep of the place. The house was in dire need of attention, and since no other family member wanted to assume responsibility, Miss Adams reluctantly decided to sell her family home. I wanted very much to save the Adams house, to put it to rights, to return its history to it, to make it livable once again."

It's a saga with overtones of Jamesian comedy: a family with bloodlines but no money is simultaneously rescued and eclipsed by an energetic upstart with money but no bloodlines. The important difference—besides the fact that Martha is marrying the house, not the son—is that she also has taste. And it's taste, far more than money, she implies, that gives her the right to these splendid, neglected piles of brick. Unlike the "frugal" Misses Bulkeley, she will keep suburbia at bay; unlike the careless Miss Adams, she would never resort to "hideous rugs" in (yuck) shades of brown. They don't understand their own houses; she does, and so she *deserves* to own their houses. But leave it to Martha to get all snippy about these people's aesthetic oversights while quietly celebrating their reversion to type. They're useful to her, and not only because their indifference to decor bolsters her claim to their property. Like the pumpkin pine floors and original fixtures, these quaintly cheeseparing New Englanders denote the property's authenticity.

The fantasy of vaulting into the upper crust that Martha Stewart fulfilled, and now piques in her readers, is about more than just money, of course. Among other things, it's about time, and the luxurious plenitude of it. Living the Martha way would mean enjoying a surfeit of that scarce commodity, cooking and crafting at the artisanal pace her projects require. Trouble is, none of us overworked Americans has time to spare these days—and least of all the upscale professional women whom Stewart targets. Martha herself seemed to acknowledge this when she told *Inside Media* that she attracts at least two classes of true believers: the "Be-Marthas," who have enough money and manic devotion to follow many of her lifestyle techniques, and the "Do-Marthas," who "are a little bit envious" and "don't have as much money as the Be-Marthas."

To those fulsome categories, you could surely add the "watch Marthas" or the "read Marthas," people who might consider, say, making their own rabbit-shaped wire topiary forms, but only consider it, who mostly just indulge in the fantasy of doing so, if only they had the time. There is something undeniably soothing about watching Martha at her absurdly time-consuming labors. A female "media executive" explained the appeal to Barbara Lippert in *New York* magazine: "I never liked Martha Stewart until I started watching her on Sunday mornings. I turn on the TV, and I'm in my pajamas, still in this place between sleep and reality. And she's showing you how to roll your tablecloths in parchment paper. She's like a character when she does her crafts. It reminds me of watching Mr. Green Jeans on Captain Kangaroo. I remember he had a shoebox he took out that was filled with craft things. There would be a close-up on his hands with his buffed nails. And then he would show you how to cut an oaktag with a scissor, or when he folded paper, he'd say: 'There you go, boys and girls,' and it was very quiet. It's like she brings out this great meditative focus and calm."

The show does seem strikingly unfrenetic. Unlike just about everything else on TV, including the "Our Home" show, which follows it on Lifetime, it eschews Kathy Lee-type banter, perky music, swooping studio shots and jittery handheld cameras. Instead there's just Martha, alone in her garden or kitchen, her teacherly tones blending with birdsong, her recipes cued to the seasons. Whimsical recorder music pipes along over the credits. Martha's crisply ironed denim shirts, pearl earrings, and honey-toned highlights bespeak the fabulousness of Connecticut. Her hands move slowly, deliberately over her yellow roses or her Depression glasses. Martha is a Puritan who prepares "sinful" foods—few of her recipes are low-fat or especially health-conscious—that are redeemed by the prodigious labors, the molasses afternoons, involved in serving them. (She preys upon our guilt about overindulgence, then hints at how to assuage it.) Here at Turkey Hill, time is as logy as a

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honey-sated bumblebee. Here on Lifetime, the cable channel aimed at baby-boom women, Martha's stately show floats along in a sea of stalker movies, Thighmaster commercials and "Weddings of a Lifetime" segments, and by comparison, I have to say, she looks rather dignified. Would that we all had these *très riches heures*.

But if we had the hours, if we had the circumstances, wouldn't we want to fill them with something of our own, with a domestic grace of our own devising? Well, maybe not anymore. For taste is no longer an expression of individuality. It is, more often, an instrument of conformism, a way to assure ourselves that we're living by the right codes, dictated or sanctioned by experts. Martha Stewart's "expertise" is really nothing but another name for the perplexity of her cowed consumers. A lifestyle cult as all-encompassing as hers could thrive only at a time when large numbers of Americans have lost confidence in their own judgment about the most ordinary things. For this reason, *Martha Stewart Living* isn't really living at all. •

Earl Warren Is Dead

BY CASS R. SUNSTEIN

Freedom's Law: The Moral Reading of the American Constitution by Ronald Dworkin

(Harvard University Press, 404 pp., $35)

Every first-year law student encounters Learned Hand, the famous judge with the strange name. Hand is well-known for his provocative statements about liberty and the Supreme Court of the United States. He wrote that "the spirit of liberty" is the spirit that "is not too sure that it is right." And with respect to the role of the Supreme Court, Hand wrote, "For myself, it would be most irksome to be ruled by a bevy of nine Platonic Guardians, even if I knew how to choose them, which I most assuredly do not."

Hand is also famous for believing that the Supreme Court should generally lack the authority to enforce the Bill of Rights. This is a radical position, but it is important to understand what led Hand to it. Hand thought that the Supreme Court's use of the Bill of Rights (including the Constitution's equal protection and due process clauses) threatens to produce judicial tyranny. The threat arises from a simple fact. It is that the Constitution contains very abstract phrases—equal protection, due process, unreasonable searches and seizures—and such phrases, in Hand's view, inevitably mean whatever judges wish them to mean. The judicial use of such phrases risks tyranny because judges are not democratically elected, and they may well be "too sure" of their own unreliable judgments about the meanings of those abstractions.

In insisting on this risk, and in describing the "spirit of liberty" in his distinctive way, was Hand saying anything of importance? His statement about liberty seems to verge on moral relativism or skepticism, which are hopeless foundations for constitutional law. Surely we should be sure of some things. We should be sure that racial apartheid is wrong, that suppression of political dissent is unacceptable, that government should not torture people. And Hand's statement seems, in any case, to contradict itself. Why aren't people committed to liberty unsure about their commitment to liberty, or, for that matter, unsure about their own lack of certainty about whether they are right?

Many citizens and lawyers, especially those still under the spell of the Warren Court, see Hand's statements as confused, irrelevant, even horrifying. Those statements were made, after all, in the midst of the great national debate over the great school segregation case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the Court's decision in *Brown* was vindicated long ago. Certainly Hand can be regarded as an extremist, and an anachronism, insofar as he claimed that courts should generally not enforce the Bill of Rights, the internationally emulated pride of America's experiment in democratic self-government. Consider, for example, the thrilling fact that South Africa itself is in the midst of adopting a bill of rights, to be safeguarded by a distinguished Constitutional Court.

But let us try to understand Hand's

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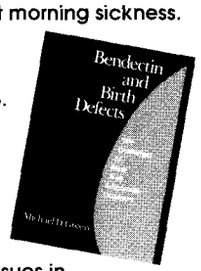

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claim in its context, which involves the appropriate role of judges in a constitutional democracy. Hand's point is not that people should not be sure about their deepest convictions. It is that citizens generally, and judges in particular, should not be *too* sure of themselves. This is especially true of judges, who tend to be relatively well-off lawyers, who are not trained as moral theorists, and (Hand's constant reminder) whose own deepest commitments may turn out to be wrong. Judges should work in a spirit of humility and caution, not because they are moral skeptics but because they are realists about their own limitations.

Which brings us to Ronald Dworkin. He served as law clerk to Learned Hand in 1957, and greatly admired him. But Dworkin has spent most of his career urging judges to assume precisely the role that Hand would not have tolerated. We might even say that Dworkin has stood Hand on his head. What Hand most feared and deplored, Dworkin most embraces and praises. Thus it is that Dworkin urges courts to offer a "moral reading" of the Constitution. A moral reading, as Dworkin has it, is one that, first, takes the Constitution as setting out big, abstract moral principles (freedom of speech, equal protection of the law) and that, second, instructs judges to ask large questions about how each abstract principle is best understood. Dworkin thinks that our legal and political cultures are badly confused on this score, which is why judges explain their decisions in "embarrassingly unsatisfactory ways" that refer not to abstract moral principles, which are what really count, but instead to such things as constitutional history or structure.

The goal of Dworkin's new book is to defend the moral reading through which Supreme Court justices use abstract moral principles, taken at the most general possible level, as limits on government's power. (He does urge others, including elected officials, to attempt "the moral reading," but judges get the last and hence most important word.) The book consists of seventeen essays, mostly published in *The New York Review of Books*. Readers of Dworkin's previous work will find no groundbreaking material, but they will find many interesting applications. The book comes in three parts. The first is dominated by the issue of abortion; the second mostly involves freedom of speech; the third deals with judges, above all with Dworkin's Great White Whale, Robert Bork (who gets three entire chapters), but also with Clarence Thomas and Learned Hand.

In the discussion of abortion, Dworkin maintains that a proper interpretation of the Constitution yields up a right to decide whether or not to procreate. Dworkin also thinks that the state's legitimate interest—to promote a responsible attitude toward human life and its value—does not allow the state to interfere with the woman's choice at the early stages of pregnancy. In the second part of the book, Dworkin insists that freedom of speech must be understood as an abstract moral principle (no surprise) and that the free speech clause cannot be applied to concrete cases except by assigning some overall purpose to it. Dworkin believes that there are, broadly speaking, two possible understandings of that purpose. The first is instrumental: it sees the First Amendment as contributing to the search for truth, or democratic self-government, or some other end. The second understanding, which Dworkin endorses, does not emphasize consequences, but sees the First Amendment as a "constitutive" feature of a just society. Dworkin thinks that government insults its citizens when it concludes that people cannot be trusted to hear opinions that might persuade them. Government may never regulate speech on the ground that it will persuade people, or on the ground that people are not fit to hear and to consider it.

These propositions lead Dworkin to three large conclusions. First, government may not regulate sexually explicit speech, even if that material qualifies as obscene under the Court's current standard and even if it combines sex with violence. Second, hate speech in general is protected by the First Amendment. Third, and most surprising, the First Amendment bans most actions for libel. The Supreme Court has said that public officials and public figures must show that the defendant had "actual malice"—knowledge of the falsity of the statements or reckless indifference to the matter of truth or falsity. Dworkin offers the sweeping and surprising conclusion that all plaintiffs—not just public officials and public figures, but ordinary people whose reputations have been damaged by media falsehoods—should be required to show actual malice, partly as a way of protecting the moral independence of journalists and their audiences.

Much of the third part of the book is preoccupied with Bork, who is famous for saying that the meaning of the Constitution should be settled by asking how its terms were understood by those who ratified it. The "original understanding" strategy is designed to focus courts on a historical question, and in that way to bracket questions of morality and politics and to banish them from the courts. To this view, Dworkin makes two responses. He says that originalists need to decide on the level of generality at which the original understanding is to be read. Do we take the First Amendment as setting forth a narrow principle limited to the framers' specific understandings? Or do we take the amendment at an intermediate level of generality, focused on, for example, political speech, which most concerned them? Or do we see it as a very general principle? Dworkin believes that the ratifiers of a constitutional provision are not likely to have decided that question, and in any case the text invites the most general approach. Dworkin also says that originalism begs all the relevant questions. Bork charges that nonoriginalists are abandoning the Constitution; but why should we identify "the Constitution" with the original understanding of its provisions? That question—Dworkin rightly says—cannot be treated as a historical matter. It requires a moral or political argument, and Bork and his followers do not usually attempt to make such an argument.

Dworkin's own argument against originalism goes as follows. It is important to have a system of rights that is genuinely principled; we should avoid a system of arbitrary and isolated decrees. Suppose that the framers believed that race discrimination is unacceptable in general, but that school segregation is fine, and even more that there is no problem with discrimination on the basis of sex. We now have more information, and so we should not be stuck with their less principled and less informed conception of what the equal protection clause entails. If we understand the Constitution by reference to the framers' particular understandings of its reach, we end up with specific prohibitions rather than what the abstract text invites: a community of principle. Why shouldn't we adopt a method of interpretation that produces the latter? Dworkin thinks that this question leads us toward the moral reading.

Dworkin is a remarkable rhetorician, and he is urging something important when he insists that any approach to constitutional interpretation requires a moral or political argument. You cannot say, for example, that the framers' understandings are binding because they understood their understandings to be binding. That would be circular. You cannot urge judicial restraint of Hand's sort without making moral or political claims. But it is precisely here that the weakness of Dworkin's argument may

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be found. There is not just one moral reading. There is a plurality of moral readings. And Dworkin's adversaries—including Bork and Hand—are making moral claims, and offering moral readings, of their own.

It is for moral reasons, in fact, that Dworkin is quite wrong to urge the Supreme Court to see the Constitution as setting forth abstract moral principles for judicial use. Most judges are not comfortable with the largest questions of political morality, and they know that they may well go wrong if they try to decide on "the point" of constitutional guarantees. Decisions about "the point" are deeply contentious and exceptionally difficult. Moreover, facts are important to constitutional judgments, and the fact-finding capacity of judges is very limited. Judges know that they may not produce social reform even when their cause is worthy and they seek to do so. In these circumstances, it is usually—not always, but usually—best for judges to resolve concrete cases rather than to choose among abstract theories, and to make their decisions on the basis of modest, low-level, relatively particularistic principles on which diverse people can converge.

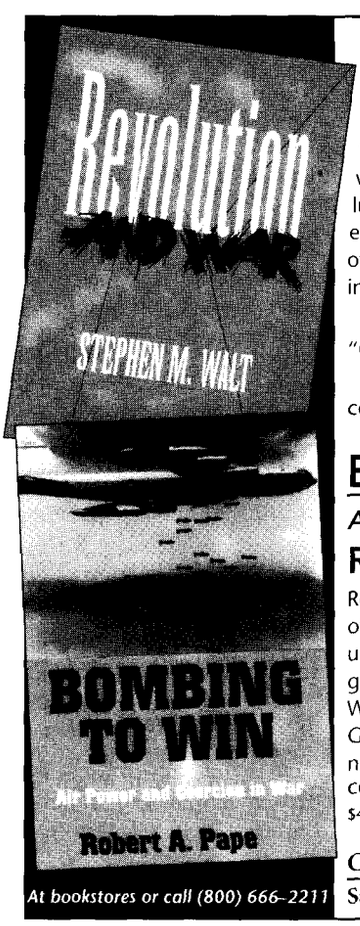
Judges do this partly for pragmatic reasons; such an approach saves time and energy. But they also do it for reasons of principle. They wish to demonstrate mutual respect and to make it possible for diverse people to live with one another despite their disagreements. People who decline to resolve the deepest and most fundamental issues of philosophy can help to promote stability and reciprocal good will in a heterogeneous society. And such people further a central goal of a liberal democracy: to make it possible to obtain agreement when agreement is necessary, and to make it unnecessary to obtain agreement when agreement is impossible. Consider an analogy. Anyone who has served on a committee knows that people who diverge on abstract issues can often agree on particular issues. They can converge on the specific outcome; they might also be able to agree on a reason for the outcome. And yet they put the largest issues to one side if they possibly can. This is an especially useful model for law.

In a democratic system, moreover, it is usually good for judges to be reluctant to use abstract principles—equal protection, freedom of speech, and others on whose specification reasonable people can disagree—to oppose democratic judgments. Hence judges attempt to develop a range of devices—most importantly, rules of interpretation and analogical thinking—to reduce their need to develop abstract theories about constitutional provisions, in recognition of their own ignorance and limitations. Dworkin finds these devices "embarrassingly unsatisfactory." I think that they are a crucial part of the material of law—indeed, a central aspect of the best and most truly moral reading of the Constitution.

In the end, Dworkin's argument for judicial guardianship is rooted in the simple, quasi-empirical claim that, all things considered, judges thinking in abstract terms are more likely than anyone else to make good judgments about the rights that Americans actually have. But Dworkin's evidence in support of this position is anecdotal and very thin, especially if we put the Warren Court to one side. In any case, the right to democratic government is part of the set of rights that people have, and judicial use of abstract moral principles may well intrude on those rights.

Dworkin's position is interesting, however, because it captures the enduring appeal of the Warren Court, and because something of its general sort underlies the contemporary enthusiasm for courts among conservatives seeking to use abstract moral principles for their own ends—to invalidate affirmative action programs, to stop campaign finance regulation, to protect commercial advertising, to restrict regulation of property rights, to diminish the role of the national government in favor of the states. Dworkin thinks that the underlying debates are really about substantive moral issues, about what moral arguments are best. I think that these debates are about institutional issues, too; they involve the appropriate constraints on judicial discretion and judicial power.

Turn, for example, to the question of originalism in constitutional law. Without endorsing originalism, we should notice that Dworkin's attack on that approach to constitutional interpretation says nothing about the comparative virtues and vices of judges and legislators. As against ancestor-worship, Dworkin says, "time has given us the information and understanding that [the framers] lacked." But Dworkin's key terms—"us" "information" "understanding"—beg the central questions. The impulse toward originalism in constitutional law is best understood not as moral skepticism, but as a way of limiting judicial discretion and increasing the potential effect of moral and political deliberation in democratic arenas. If we—Americans—really have more information, which is to say, more facts and



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different (and let us suppose better) moral judgments, then "we" can enforce our judgments through ordinary legislation. This is no pipe dream. In many areas of unjustified inequality, one of Dworkin's central concerns, the most numerous and most important recent initiatives have come from state legislatures and Congress, not from federal courts. Consider discrimination on the basis of disability and sexual orientation, where elected officials have initiated action though the Supreme Court has been silent or hostile; and in the areas of both race and sex discrimination, elected branches, making or responding to moral convictions, have gone well beyond the Court.

The impulse toward originalism in constitutional law is most generously understood in terms of skepticism about courts rather than skepticism about morality. (Readers will be frustrated to find that Dworkin rarely puts counter-arguments in their strongest form.) Maybe judges who see the Constitution as specific historical judgments, rather than as abstract principles, will produce a better understanding of rights than Dworkinian judges; and maybe their limited understandings will be sufficiently corrected by moral or political judgments from the citizenry. If the choice were between a community of principle and a community of arbitrary decrees, Dworkin's argument would be much more convincing. But this is not the choice. The choice is between judges who seek to create a community of principle, in light of their own understandings of principle, and judges who see themselves as closely tied to historical understandings. This choice is a much harder one. It depends on contingent and debatable facts about comparative competence.

I do not mean to say that Dworkin is wrong to reject Bork's version of originalism. He is quite right to do so: a form of originalism that would limit Supreme Court justices to the most specific understandings of the framers would produce an unacceptably truncated system of constitutional rights. And Dworkin is also right to say that consequences of this kind matter to the choice of interpretive method. On what else could that choice depend? The real limitations on judicial discretion come not from specific historical understandings from framers, but from close attention to precedent, analogical reasoning, various rules of interpretation, judge-made "doctrine," and a general judicial unwillingness to reject democratic judgments in the face of doubt. The problem is that Dworkin misdescribes and even fails to see the problem with which originalists are concerned, that is, the development of interpretive rules to limit judicial mistakes through judicial misunderstandings of abstract concepts.

So what about the First Amendment? Let us compare Dworkin's "constitutive" approach with the very different strategy of real judges. More than 200 years after the ratification of the Bill of Rights, the Supreme Court has not made a decision about "the point" of that amendment. It has referred, to be sure, to a range of values promoted by freedom of speech, and it has used those values to decide cases, but it has not decided between instrumental and constitutive conceptions, and the complex body of free speech law is not united by a single overarching theory.

Is this a mistake? Should the Court choose the constitutive view? This is not at all clear. Instead of thinking through first principles, ordinary judges look at precedents, and they like to think about particular cases and particular analogies. This is one way that judges discipline themselves: we might say that in deciding cases, they ascend to the lowest necessary level of abstraction. Real judges know that government is now allowed to regulate many forms of talk—criminal solicitation, criminal conspiracy, attempted bribery, false or misleading commercial advertising, and even some truthful commercial advertising (as in, for example, advertisements for cigarettes, alcohol or gambling). In all of these cases, government appears to be regulating speech because it fears that people will be persuaded by it. Does Dworkin mean to argue that regulation of this sort violates the First Amendment? And how does he square his views on libel law, or for that matter pornography, with analogous areas of free speech law? He does not answer these questions.

In defending the moral reading of the Constitution, Dworkin stresses that history and precedent do matter and do constrain; but his discussion of the First Amendment deals at best haphazardly with the past or precedent, and works almost entirely from philosophical abstractions. The same is true for his discussion of abortion. He locates the right to abort in the religion clauses of the First Amendment, a remarkably adventurous interpretation that, to say the least, fits uncomfortably with precedent. Compare real judges. To the extent that they can, they avoid the largest abstractions about the First Amendment's "point" and work instead from actual cases and existing legal doctrine—for example, government cannot suppress political dissent without a clear and present danger; commercial speech can be regulated if it is false or misleading. People who are unsure or disagree about the First Amendment's point can often agree on more modest, lower-level ideas of this kind.

In fact Dworkin's treatment of free speech issues lacks anything like the continuous grappling with concrete issues—with actual and hypothetical problems—that forms so large a part of the judge's daily work. Not only is his discussion of libel unengaged with analogies, it also deals hardly at all with the intensely factual issues on which a successful resolution of the libel question depends. What (we might want to know) would be the actual effect of different libel law regimes? On certain factual assumptions, current libel law might plausibly be said to promote the autonomy of readers, who, with current law, have far greater assurance that what they read might actually be true. In any case, it is hardly clear that the autonomy of readers is promoted by exposure to factual falsehoods. I do not mean to resolve the libel issue here; but without undertaking some patient work through analogies and through facts, a judge cannot test whether his own understanding actually fits the law, or even fits his own judgments about what the law should be in hard cases.

All this brings us back to Learned Hand. Dworkin's final essay is about his former boss, and this is, I think, the most intriguing chapter in the book, largely because of the tension between Dworkin's evident affection for Hand and Dworkin's equally evident antipathy toward Hand's views, which would lead to a role for courts far more modest than that favored by Bork and the fiercest critics of *Roe* v. *Wade*. Why did Hand develop these views? For one thing, he despised "absolutes." This was not because he held a considered philosophical position against "absolutes" (what would that position look like?), but because he thought that people and especially judges should be willing (in Benjamin Franklin's words) to "doubt a little of [their] own fallibility."

For another thing, Hand was, in Dworkin's reading, an old-style civic republican. That is, he believed that a political community requires a high degree of participation by its citizens in the community's most important decisions, and he believed in the value and the need for a high degree of deliberation and responsibility on the part of citizens. Hand did not see democracy as a mere statistical affair, rooted in an effort to aggregate private preferences, but as

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a deliberative device by which citizens, with their own moral commitments, engage in dialogue and discussion with one another. Hand's defense of this conception of democracy was unquestionably moral in character. And that defense had everything to do with Hand's disapproval of judicial review. If we seek deliberative judgments from the citizenry, we are not likely to prize a system in which the greatest moral issues are resolved by nine lawyers in black robes.

Dworkin has very little to say against his former boss's emphatically moral defense of judicial abdication. He does say, and rightly, that modern American politics is not republican. Quite the contrary. Political debate in America often has little to do with moral questions, and it is too frequently a matter of compromise among powerful interests. Dworkin adds that the perception that an issue is constitutional can improve political argument, by making it more infused with issues of morality. He offers the example of the discussion of abortion in America, which, in his view, has involved more people, and been more broadly inclusive, than it would have been without *Roe* v. *Wade*.

But this is not much of an answer to Hand. The natural response to a system that suffers from too little moral deliberation in democratic arenas is not to transfer authority to courts, it is to try to encourage more moral deliberation in democratic arenas. Nor is it at all clear that an aggressive Supreme Court produces more and more inclusive deliberation (except perhaps by way of loud but futile criticisms of the Court). Indeed, judicial review can inhibit moral deliberation, by making people think that the Court will have the last word and hence that morality is really the province of the courts. This has happened on many occasions in the last quarter-century; "don't ask, don't tell" is the most recent example. Here, too, we come upon empirical questions—what is the effect of Supreme Court decisions on moral deliberation?—that philosophical abstractions cannot resolve.

And here we come close to the heart of the matter. Throughout this book Dworkin tends to conflate three different things: moral deliberation; constitutional interpretation having moral dimensions; and aggressive judicial review through "the moral reading" of the Constitution. Of course Dworkin is right to insist on moral deliberation, and it is surely good if constitutional interpretation promotes moral deliberation, at least if constitutional interpretation occurs, as it more often should, outside as well as inside the judiciary. But the arguments for aggressive judicial review by means of "the moral reading" cannot be carried by arguments for more moral deliberation. Since aggressive judicial review may produce moral error and diminish the level and the importance of moral argument outside of the courts by making it irrelevant, Dworkin's own enthusiasm for moral deliberation plausibly cuts—on moral grounds—against his own "moral reading." Or, to put it another way, first principles cannot justify allowing courts to be entirely unembarrassed about having the last word on issues of morality.

When things are going well, American judges are well aware of the relevant risks. They decide cases without embracing abstract theories partly because of their knowledge of their limited place in a constitutional democracy. Dworkin's approach misconceives legal reasoning, since it fails to see that good judges generally avoid the largest moral questions and build up devices of self-restraint not in defiance of a moral reading but in accordance with one. They do this because they are well aware of their own limitations. When it comes to issues of political morality, they are not too sure that they are right; and on this count they are surely right.

This does not mean that basic principles cannot tell us anything about the role of the court or about the contents of a "moral reading" of the Constitution. Obviously a good moral reading supports interpretive strategies that reduce judicial discretion and judicial power. In addition, Hand's commitment to republican self-government does not support his prescription of judicial abdication. Here Hand was very sloppy. When courts protect political dissenters, they do not undermine democracy, rightly conceived; they strengthen democracy, by ensuring its preconditions. When courts attempt to ensure accountability, by requiring government to provide reasons for its actions, they promote a well-functioning republic by ensuring against the constitutional framers' dual fears, factional power and self-interested representation. When judges protect groups at a systematic risk in insufficiently democratic political processes, they do so not in spite of, but in the name of, democracy. We might conclude that the great defect in Learned Hand's purportedly democratic argument was that he did not take democracy seriously enough. Oddly, and in a very different way, this is also the great defect in Ronald Dworkin's approach to constitutional law.

CASS R. SUNSTEIN is the author of *Legal Reasoning and Political Conflict*, just published by Oxford University Press.

Mr. Cogito

BY PETER GALISON

Descartes: An Intellectual Biography by Stephen Gaukroger

(Oxford University Press, 499 pp., $35)

In the winter of 1619-20, René Descartes had a dream. In the midst of fever, thunderstorms and panic, phantoms appeared before the young scholar. Unable to beat them back, he felt shame and weakness in his right side. A window opened, and in terror he found himself borne away by a violent wind. Staggering to a chapel, he struggled to enter it. He failed. Some people passed by, one of them carrying a melon from a foreign land. He understood that an evil genius was trying to seduce him and fought to exorcise it. Sleep came, thunderclaps woke him again, and in the confusion he opened, shut and reopened his eyes—and found certainty.

Was he dreaming or awake? In another dream, Descartes opened a dictionary and book of poems, seeing this single line of Ausonius: *Quod vitae sectabor iter?* (What path in life shall I follow?) A man appeared and tried to make him read another Ausonian passage that began: "it is and is not." The book vanished, to be replaced by some portraits. Peace returned to the night. Descartes himself offered an analysis of his dreams. They were, in his view, philosophical allegories. The dictionary, he contended, represented the unity of the sciences, the coming together of philosophy and wisdom and, finally, God protecting him from the evil genius. Thunder was the sign of the spirit of truth, and the melon a sign of "the charms of solitude, but presented by purely human inducements."

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In these dreams we can find bits and fragments of Descartes's philosophy: the struggle for certainty, the quest to defeat the evil genius of doubt and epistemic deception, the aspiration for a unity of knowledge and—perhaps most importantly—the grappling with faith. But we who live in an age of psychoanalytic interpretation are beckoned also by the prospect of other layers, "deeper" strata. And some 300 years after that tortured night, in 1929, a Descartes scholar was intrigued by the dreams and sent a paraphrase of them (from an early biographer who had seen Descartes's original and subsequently lost record of them) to Freud. He responded by picking out certain features, such as Descartes's partial, right-side weakness, as a sign of internal conflict. Freud speculated that the melon might "represent a sexual picture which occupied the lonely young man's imagination." Above all, he cautioned that this was a *Traum von oben*, a complex of ideas so highly structured that it might as well have come from the organized thoughts of waking life—whence their poetic and abstractly symbolic form. No doubt Descartes had done an exemplary job of parsing the dream from above; but in such dreams, Freud wrote, the few bits "about which the dreamer does not know what to say" are where the exploration of the unconscious must begin.

RENÉ DESCARTES BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In writing a life of Descartes, Stephen Gaukroger is in a position not entirely dissimilar from Freud's. Absent the kind of detail needed to piece together the texture of Descartes's life, all that we have is Descartes's own record of his life—a record at once poetic, abstract and symbolic. Gaukroger calls his work an "intellectual biography"; it is (to paraphrase Freud) a *Biographie von oben*. His story of Descartes is the story of a cluster of ideas located in an eclectic intellectual environment. We encounter the ins and outs of Descartes's exploration of theology, a myriad of sects, heresies and orthodoxies. There are the mathematical intricacies of Descartes's venture into geometrical optics, algebra and geometry; the complexities of sixteenth-century music theory, the models and the metaphors that Descartes employed to explain physiology and physics. Throughout Gaukroger's book there is an abiding concern with the philosophical issues that emerge from, and motivate, these scientific explorations. This is a biography "from above," partly because Descartes did not leave the archival record to support a psychological or social-historical exploration, and partly because Gaukroger is really a historian of philosophy.

Despite his close attention to philosophical, religious and scientific ideas, there are moments in Gaukroger's book when the vivid Cartesian personality breaks out: in Descartes's attachment to his illegitimate daughter Francine born in 1635, in his fury at his adversaries. Descartes called Fermat, perhaps the greatest mathematician of his time, "shit," and Thomas Hobbes "extremely contemptible" for criticizing the *Discours de la méthode*. The letters of the French mathematician and lawyer Jean Beaugrand were "toilet paper." On the whole, however, Gaukroger's book is not so much a personal portrait of Descartes as it is an extraordinary perambulation around the spiritual and intellectual life of the seventeenth century. It tells the tale of Descartes's recasting of the concerns of his contemporaries into a world that we find utterly familiar.

According to a widely held reading, Descartes was the quintessential mechanist, having conceived a clockwork world that functioned gear against gear, so to speak, without soul, center or divinity. That has made him a hero to some: Descartes as the first modern, the one who freed tradition from Aristotelean dogma and Church doctrine to create a rational universe that ran on nothing but natural law. For other philosophically inclined critics, especially in the twentieth century, Descartes has become the dreadful harbinger of a desanctified universe, where a utilitarian rationality rules, and the ethical-physical cosmos gives way to empty void, and humanity is left to fend for itself on an insignificant speck shoved this way or that somewhere in infinite space. Still others argue that Descartes's framing of the mind-body division (of what Gilbert Ryle called, in his famous attack on Cartesianism, "the ghost in the machine"), his contributions to the establishment of subjectivity and the problematic correlation of God, the individual and nature, are still living issues for philosophy.

Within the history of science, assessments of Descartes are just as contradictory. On one side stands Descartes the hero of science: originator of the modern scientific method, creator of a naturalistic account of cosmogenesis, reformer of algebra, master of geometrical optics, avid Copernican and principal advocate of an anti-Aristotelean corpuscular materialism. On the other side broods Descartes the obscurantist, the system-building metaphysician reviled, especially by the British natural philosophical tradition. This is the Descartes whose intellectual offspring (so the accusation goes) misguidedly and stubbornly refused the mathematical-physical wisdom of Newton, the Descartes who speculated idly about natural

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phenomena instead of experimenting methodically.

Identified (ambivalently) by Edmund Husserl and the phenomenological tradition as the creator of modern philosophy, admired by Noam Chomsky for his account of a mind rich with innate capacity to structure ideas, Descartes remains even today a central figure in semiotics, literary theory and epistemology. Everywhere one turns in philosophy and its cognate fields, there is Descartes. His works remain the touchstone for instruction in "modern philosophy": Descartes is taught as having launched the rationalism of Spinoza and Leibniz *and* the empiricism of Locke, Berkeley and Hume. How, Descartes persistently asked, can we be sure that what is in our minds is also in the world? That fundamental epistemological question still launches debates at the end of the twentieth century.

But if it is impossible to avoid Descartes, it is equally difficult to reconstruct him. Aside from the difficulties inherent in grappling with 350 years of Cartesian scholarship, a biographer of Descartes faces a task far different from that of tracking the life of a statesman, a scientist or a writer. The problem is not a paucity of sources—Descartes wrote letters prolifically and received enthusiastic responses from a wide variety of his correspondents. One interlocutor, Father Marin Mersenne, in his moments of maximal philosophical enthusiasm, would post two or three letters a day. Nor is it a problem of locating the material; decades ago Charles Adam and Paul Tannery prepared an eleven-volume edition of Descartes's complete works, binding together letters, manuscripts and published works.

The problem for an intellectual biography of Descartes is to devise an organizing principle that structures all this material. Gaukroger does have such an organizing principle. It is somewhat obscured in first 290 pages, but I find it fascinating. It is easily stated. Gaukroger believes that the condemnation of Galileo in 1633 split Descartes's life in two. The younger Descartes looked outward, hoping to explain how the world functioned. What shaped and tinted the rainbows? What made comets fly? What made blood course through the veins? The older Descartes looked inward, seeking certainty and the constitution of selfhood.

In the first half of his life, there is Descartes's "scientific" work, which I trap in quotation marks because the twentieth-century notion of science fits badly into the early seventeenth-century

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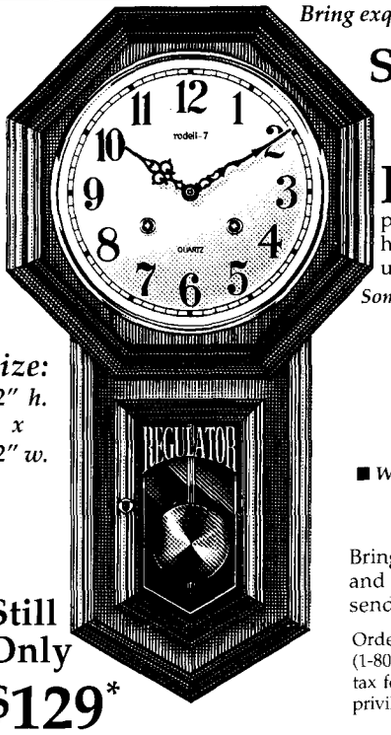

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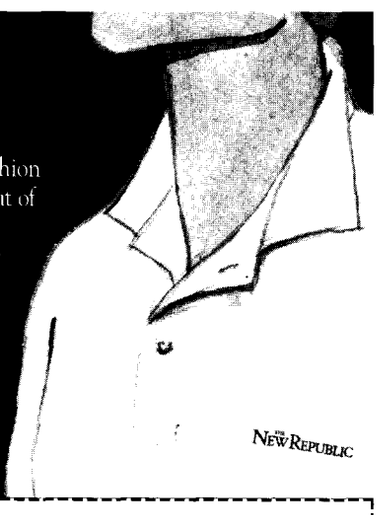

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conception of knowledge. It was during this period before 1633 that Descartes left his most original contributions to natural philosophy. Among them was his discovery of the law of refraction, spelling out, in precise quantitative form, how rays of light are bent when they pass from one medium to another, as from air to the glass of a lens. Of even greater significance were his mathematical explorations, in which he solved problems that had stymied the ancient geometers. These were victories that left Descartes ever more confident that he was in possession of a method that would provide a royal road to knowledge.

And still a third set of inquiries reexamined the very meaning of algebraic expressions. Until Descartes, the quantity x that appeared in mathematical expressions was interpreted as a line length, x^2 as an area, and x^3 as a volume. Equations with terms exponentiated beyond cubes were simply unintelligible, as they corresponded to no imaginable geometrical form. By reinterpreting these terms as ratios—x^4 through the ratio $x^4/x^3 = x$, for example—Descartes lifted higher-order algebraic quantities out of physical interpretation and made it possible to contemplate quartic, quintic, or any higher-order equations without fear of uttering nonsense.

Descartes's discoveries were epoch-making. They inaugurated new directions in natural philosophy by offering clarity about the kind of objects that there were. But nothing he had done—so Descartes believed—compared with the work he immodestly titled *Le Monde* (finished in 1632, suppressed until the 1660s). If his foundational work in algebra reduced exponentiated variables to simple extension, his corpuscular account of nature was designed to do the same for the physical world in all its apparent diversity. *Le Monde* began as an exploration of a specific physical problem, then rapidly expanded to become a model of the universe as a whole with all the living forms and the inert forms within it.

Populated by "particles" of different sizes that slid past one another, Descartes's universe was a plenum whose parts were in ceaseless motion. In this universe, there were only two things to describe: extension and motion. Beyond this distinction between extension and motion, there were no further distinctions to be made (other than microphysical shape) between one substance (say, gold) and another substance (say, lead). Though any physical metaphor is inadequate to capture Descartes's matter-and-motion universe, one might imagine oneself immersed in an infinite and pure sea populated with nothing but water and frozen chunks of water variously sized and shaped. In such a water-world, everything would be explained in terms of the extension of these rigid frozen bits of water, and their encounter with diverse vortical and shearing motions of the water itself.

The Aristoteleans posited qualities of hot and cold, hard and soft, moist and dry, transparent and opaque, and many more such dyadic pairs; but Descartes would have none of them. Hot was only the motion of parts, cold was only the absence of such motion. Fire was not the fundamental entity it had been in ancient cosmologies; combustion was merely the violent dissociation of objects through the displacement of their parts. Stones, plants, air, fire, water, earth, rainbows, even the "perfect" objects above the moon (planets, stars and the like), would be nothing but different structures within the plenum. The solar system itself was simply a whirlpool in the plenum, and gravity was the inward driving power of the vortices. Heavy objects were those that resisted the inward pull of whirlpool motion, while light objects were simply those porous to the maelstrom flow. According to Descartes, we on earth are not alone in this predictable, mechanical universe: the reaches of space are populated with other such whirlpools with other suns and other planets. (Comets were orbs thrown between different whirlpool solar systems.)

Copernicus himself held nothing so radical as Descartes's infinite, uncentered universe. The Copernican cosmos was famously supposed to spread its planets and stars across a world much larger than the diameter Ptolemy had supposed (and Copernicus's world was, of course, sun-centered). Still, Copernicus had "our" solar system squarely located at the center of a *finite* cosmos. And Galileo, too, shied away from effacing the dichotomy of the corruptible sublunary sphere in which we and all living things exist, and an unchanging superlunary sphere that would always return to its previous, perfect and unaltered form. But Descartes's science of matter and motion went further. In the second half of *Le Monde*, called "L'Homme," he put forward a fictitious world, mightily resembling our own, in which the human body worked as a superb automaton. Nerves functioned by transporting pressure, and sight became the isomorphic transport of

Summer Evening

A spear of zinc light wounds stone and water,
stripping the scarlet fuchsia bells and yellow buttercups
of any discretion, so they confess their end in this
luminous declaration that they are no more than
shortlived absolutes in living colour, bright eyes
open against the dark. It's a light in which everything
is exact-edged, flat, no bulk or heft to it, yet
decisively itself in outline: islands, the matt grey sea,
and miles away the fine glowing line of the horizon
that like desire will be the last to go. The mountain's
immense green and brown triangle reflects on itself
in lakewater, doubling its shape and colour there,
its stillness something drastic, an aspect of dread—as if
a lover tried to remember that loved other body
by looking in the mirror. Almost at random, shadows
fall across the small roads—which can never follow
their own bent, but always take the grain of the hill,
turning to its every tilt and inclination. The evening
starts to seep into hedges and hung washing: it is
the brown colour of a bat's wing, and silent
as a bat is. Even your own family now would have to
be streaked with it, their faces by degrees bleeding away
in the gather-dark, whole patches of them blackening
like zones of a map thrown on smouldering embers.

EAMON GRENNAN

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pressures on the exterior of the eye, back through tubules, until consciousness arose as the sequence of pressures arrived at the pineal gland.

Cosmologically and physiologically, Descartes's world was a stunning accomplishment, infinite in its scope of explanation. It was also doubly dangerous: it was Church-defyingly Copernican and, insofar as the human body functioned "like ours" but automatically, it was without soul. Like the world he described, his ambition was limitless: from the inner recesses of thought in imagination and ratiocination to the earth and infinite heavens, the Cartesian project promised an understanding of everything—and since everything came down to extension and motion, precise quantitative analysis. It was, as Husserl said, the first, portentous articulation of "omniscience."

In November 1633 the master treatise was nearing completion. Descartes paused to write Father Mersenne, his friend and philosophical ally, that he had been book hunting in Leiden and Amsterdam for Galileo's latest work, the *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems.* He continued, in a stunned tone: "I was told that it had indeed been published, but that all copies had been burned at Rome, and that Galileo had been convicted and fined. I was so surprised by this that I nearly decided to burn all my papers, or at least let no one see them. For I couldn't imagine that he—an Italian and, I believe, in favor with the Pope—could have been made a criminal, just because he tried, as he certainly did, to establish that the earth moves." If the earth didn't move, Descartes went on, then his whole philosophy would collapse. "But for all that, I wouldn't want to publish a discourse which had a single word that the Church disapproved of; so I prefer to suppress it rather than publish it in a mutilated form."

At this point in the story, many interpreters have looked away in disgust. Galileo, after all, stood his ground against the Church. Why not Descartes? There was no Brechtian drama in the story of Descartes, as he hurriedly packed off his Copernican treatise into oblivion. How could Descartes, the pioneer, the creator of modern philosophy and science, have lost his nerve at this crucial moment? How could the towering genius of the modern spirit of rationality have backed down in the face of ecclesiastical doctrine, especially when Descartes was himself ensconced in safe, Protestant Holland? Wasn't the effectively atheistic Descartes merely capitulating to power, delivered *ex cathedra?*

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Even before the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Syrians subjected the villages in northern Israel to almost daily shellings, making normal life impossible. In the 1967 Six-Day War, Syria attacked Israel and was defeated. Israel occupied the Golan Heights and in 1981, for all practical purposes annexed the area.

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Syria's President, Hafez Assad, is a tyrant, every bit as cunning as his Iraqi counterpart, Saddam Hussein. Under Assad, Syria is a world center for terrorism. It still harbors Nazi bigwigs who found welcome there after the World War. Few doubt that Assad was the mastermind in the suicide attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut in which 241 Americans died, and in the explosion of PanAm flight #103 in which 270 people lost their lives. He oversees one of the largest narcotics operations in the world.

Military Security—The Golan is about 10 miles wide, with a plateau on either side of a crest. If it were part of Syria it would be less than 1% of its territory. But it is of a supreme strategic importance to Israel. Its high ground provides early-warning capability, without which Israel would be subject to surprise attack by the Syrians. Its loss would obligate Israel to maintain a state of readiness and mobilization that would be economically and socially untenable. On the Golan itself, there are only two natural terrain bottlenecks through which tanks can advance. Those choke points are defensible and made possible the repulse of the 1400 Syrian tanks that attacked Israel in the 1973 war. But with the Golan in Syrian hands, and without the radar installations that would give Israel warning of any military movements, thousands of tanks—backed up by missiles and airplanes—could overrun Israel in a matter of hours. The Golan does not make for perfect defense, but it gives Israel a small breathing space for mobilization.

"With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction."

The Golan is the source of over one-third of Israel's fresh water. In 1964, with the Golan in Syrian hands, Syria attempted to divert these headwaters and to cripple Israel's water supply. It is more than likely that, given another opportunity, Syria would once again attempt to destroy Israel's water supply.

The current Israeli government, in its keen desire to bring peace to its people, after almost fifty years of war and bloodshed, would seem prepared to give up the limited strategic security it now enjoys by virtue of its possession of the high ground—the ridges of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and of the Golan Heights. But Israel should not return to the "death trap" borders of 1967 or anything close to it. In order to survive within such borders, Israel would have to rely on the goodwill of the Arab states, all of which—with the recent exception of Jordan and of the cold peace with Egypt—are still in a declared state of war with Israel. An aggressor will attack only if confident of victory. With the Golan in Israeli hands, attacking Arabs could be confident of defeat, and peace would be preserved. To hand the Golan to Syria is a prescription for war and for Israel's destruction.

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It is precisely here, in the collision of theology, philosophy, history and science, that Gaukroger is at his best. He explains that atheism in 1625 was not the belief in an untrammeled materialism, but a term of abuse with many connotations. There were atheists accused of believing that God's existence cannot be demonstrated through reason; there were atheists who subscribed to determinism; there were atheists who claimed that God's omnipotence was necessarily limited through His being enmeshed in the finite world. Not one among these atheists, and certainly not Descartes, pressed for a materialist and godless world.

Still, it was a turbulent time for Descartes, when everything was up for grabs in his intellectual circle, from the nature of God to the senses, skepticism and natural law. Debates rebounded from intellectual life to politics and back. Lucilio Vanini was burned at the stake for heresy in Toulouse; three speakers arguing against Aristotle were exiled for assembling a meeting to criticize chemical, alchemical and atomist theses. In such times, the Parisian authorities saw an unbroken link between heterodoxy and disorder. But the strictures of the premodern thought police were not absolute. At the same time that Parisians witnessed the neo-Aristotelean crackdown, various kinds of libertinage prospered: unorthodox thought, Machiavellianism, deism, debauchery. And there were the erudite libertines of the court who explored radical political, theological and scientific matters while clamoring for public order.

Reading Gaukroger, one begins to appreciate the intellectual tightrope that Descartes walked in forging a new understanding of mind, body and God. Far from sketching an unreligious Descartes acquitting himself with merely verbal acquiescence to the Church, Gaukroger's protagonist embraces a God so unknowable as to be beyond imagination. For Descartes, God was bound neither by the truths of the empirical world nor by the truths of mathematics. Indeed, the problem for Descartes was not that God is so weak, so pantheistic in conception, that He does not interfere in natural law. It was quite the reverse: God is so powerful and unknowable that He could have made all our beliefs false. That the Church, led by people of faith, could have condemned Galileo for his Copernicanism was not, for Descartes, simply an intervention of raw power. The Church's condemnation indicated to Descartes that he urgently needed to find some certainty about the basis of human knowledge.

According to Gaukroger, Galileo's condemnation brought these issues front and center to Descartes. If he was to continue in natural philosophy, it would have to be by confronting the "hyperbolic doubt" engendered by our inadequacy before the transcendental God. As Gaukroger puts it: "provided one's doubt is sufficiently radical, there is nothing that cannot be doubted, except that one is doubting, and this requires that there be something which exists that is doing the doubting." The building of systems—in the direction of mechanical explanations of phenomena of the body, the brain and the physical world—would have to be set aside for now, while a metaphysical foundation for such systems was established. The quest for certainty was on.

Just months after news of the Galileo catastrophe reached him, Descartes began composing his *Discours de la mèthode.* In one of the best-known passages in the history of philosophy, he hammered at each and every claim to certainty that we might possess. Our senses deceive us, we fail to uncover errors in argumentation, bad reasoning even slides into geometrical proofs. Away then, he says, with all these arguments. Better grounding must be elsewhere. Even our awareness of the world is threatened (as in his dream fifteen years earlier), since we may be dreaming while thinking we are awake. The one reed left standing was that "the truth 'I am thinking, therefore I exist' was so firm and sure that all the most extravagant suppositions of the sceptics were incapable of shaking it, I decided that I could accept it without scruple as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking." In this world of all-consuming doubt, only the fact of doubting was secure, and it, of all things, provided the firm foundation for certain knowledge. From the presence of this thinking subject, Descartes deduced that God must exist as well, reasoning as follows. Descartes could see that he was not perfect, for it is manifestly better to know than to doubt—and he could only be certain of his doubts. Yet he could form an *idea* of a perfect (knowing) being. What could be the origin of his idea of perfection? Such an idea could come only from God. So God exists.

The *Meditationes de prima philosophia,* which was published in 1641, took this issue much further, drawing the *cogito* argument into a contemplative journey through self-doubt into a rebirth of certainty. But, as Gaukroger rightly points out, those who view Descartes's *cogito* as no more than a more extreme instance of classical skepticism have missed the point. Descartes is not after the possibility that the world is rife with wrong opinions and that we can't distinguish between them. He is after bigger quarry, the bedrock of fundamental relations between mind, God and world.

By posing the question in terms of the relation between thinking subject, deity and external world, Descartes made a purely epistemological question (about our knowledge) into one that is at root metaphysical (about the nature of mind, God and world). He articulated a notion of subjectivity (borrowed in part from Montaigne) and a notion of an external world. These notions are so absolutely constitutive of our own self-conception that it is hard to recreate the novelty of the problem. But the yawning, painfully unbridgeable gap between mind and matter has remained with us as a problem, a legacy of Descartes's adventure.

And Descartes knew just how confounding the gap was. In 1643, the 25-year-old Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Frederick, King of Bohemia and Elector Palatine, began a powerful correspondence that seems to have captured Descartes's heart and soul. Having read Descartes's cautious exposition of his views after he suppressed *Le Monde,* she was well aware of his system of corpuscles that were to account for the world around us. How, she asked in her first letter, could Descartes's system of mechanical corpuscles pressing on the pineal gland (the part of the brain that Descartes promoted into the seat of consciousness) interact with the immateriality of mind?

Launched into the thick of the problem, Descartes began his last great metaphysical foray into the *Les Passions de l'Ame,* developing in the course of this work the view that there was, metaphysically, a halfway house between the abode of the mind and that of the body. It was a difficult, often contradictory venture, this admixture of mind and body, a halting, intriguing, ultimately unsuccessful solution. As far I can see, however, despite periodic protestations to the contrary, we are not one millimeter closer to finding a "solution" to the mind-body question as Descartes posed it than we were four centuries ago. The *Passions* bring us to the conclusion of the intellectual trajectory of Descartes's life—a fitting attempt to repair the rupture that he had opened between self and world, between mind and body. The narrative of Descartes's intellectual contribution closes, but the biographical project raises questions that are not so easily concluded.

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Recall the tortured dreams of 1619. They raise a fascinating and probably intractable problem about the enterprise of writing a biography of Descartes. Gaukroger, of course, knows these dreams, and after reporting on Freud's interpretation (which he modifies in some interesting ways) he concludes with a cluster of suggestions: the dreams and the mental state that preceded them could have been a migraine. Or perhaps the state is better understood as a state of melancholia or *tristesse*, "fashionable [medical] condition[s] in the seventeenth century." Or, Gaukroger's favorite reading: "One possibility is that Descartes suffered a nervous breakdown, recovered from it, and rationalized his recovery in terms of a great discovery. I think this is probably close to the truth." (The particular "great discovery" was Descartes's venture into the articulation of a generalized method for reasoning, developed in his *Regulae ad directionem ingenii* over the next few years.)

Such psychological, quasi-Freudian language (as in "nervous breakdown") comes easily to Gaukroger. Another example occurs after Descartes's sudden rupture with his old teacher, Isaac Beeckman, where Gaukroger writes: "it is possible that his reaction to Beeckman may be overdetermined by his relation to his father." In another place he describes the *Passions* as a form of "psychotherapy." Though interventions of this kind occupy a relatively small part of his text, I take them to be a crucial part of Gaukroger's method. Indeed, he has chosen as the epigram for his biography Nietzsche's words from *Beyond Good and Evil*: "Every great philosophy has so far been the self-confession of its originator, a kind of unintentional, unconscious *memoires*."

Any biography written in the twentieth century, of course, must confront the psychological dimension of its subject. Notions of the unconscious and its modes of expression are no longer "theories"; they are thoroughly interwoven with our sense of individuality and subjectivity. And that is precisely the problem. Descartes's lifework was the creation of the category of subjectivity, of the radical and unresolvable difference between "the world" and "the world for us." What does it mean in such a case to talk about a "nervous breakdown," and projections of the father relation, and the rationalization of unconscious tensions? One can, of course, simply take the categories of self elaborated through psychoanalysis as true for all peoples and all times and apply these categories to Descartes to displace his own confused or merely rationalizing tendencies. Another approach, infinitely more difficult, would be to take seriously Descartes's and his contemporaries' construction of the notion of self in a society in which the category did not previously exist (or existed in a very different form).

The historian Norbert Elias famously tracked the slow rise of conditioned habits that transformed European rules of comportment from matters of respect toward others to an internalized sense of shame, fear or guilt experienced even in solitude. Out of this transformation (he argued) came the "modern" conception of self so fully articulated in the psychoanalytic account of human nature. The most difficult and important task facing the historian-philosopher, I think, is to take this historicity of the "self" seriously. And when one takes the historicity of the "self" seriously, a fundamental tension emerges. On the one side, the very genre of twentieth-century biography demands an "inner" or "depth" reading of text, as in Nietzsche's notion of philosophy as confession. On the other side, we have here a subject, Descartes, located in late Renaissance Europe, in whose work the very possibility of such a "depth" reading is precisely that which is in formation. The *Biographie von oben* pushes Gaukroger to a *Biographie von unten*; but there is something inherently unstable about such a project, focused, as it is, on a history of the separation between *oben* and *unten*.

Still, Gaukroger has written an extraordinary book. It is a never-ending source of astonishment that Descartes can still be so absolutely strange and so absolutely familiar. There is the Descartes who argued that magnetism be best understood as tiny screws whirling through space, or who insisted that the lowly pineal gland was the seat of the mind, or who posited a universe of whirlpools set in motion by an unknowable God; and there is the Descartes whose notions of certainty, of mind against matter, and of human subjectivity are as familiar as the face in the mirror. Gaukroger has united the strange and the familiar in Descartes, teaching us something fundamental about the early conception of our world.

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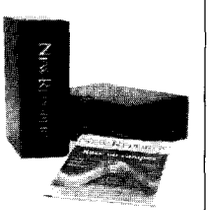
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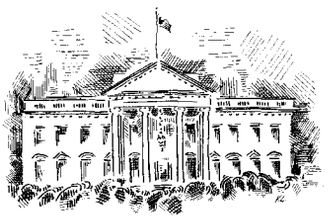
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Scary

I SUPPOSE IT'S POSSIBLE THAT Theodore Kaczynski isn't the Unabomber. Maybe he's simply a mountain man done wrong, a Grizzly Adams with a penchant for explosives and wires, wordy manifestos and wood carvings, who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time when the feds came a knockin'. By the same token, Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols could be innocent, too. And maybe the feds are lying when they say that McVeigh's fingerprints are on a receipt for 40 bags of ammonium nitrate fertilizer. And, if they are on it, then, maybe, McVeigh planned to use the fertilizer for ... er ... farming, the agrarian life he would take up as soon as he left the gun-show circuit. Hey, I'm willing to believe that these guys are innocent until proven guilty. But suppose they are the murderers that government officials say they are. If that's the case then I've got some advice for them: confess. Take McVeigh. By his own admission, he's a member of the Patriot Movement—the black helicopter crowd that fears United Nations omnipotence. (Does this fear resonate with the citizens of Sarajevo?) How does someone like McVeigh rationalize accepting millions of dollars in government-provided legal protection? One day the government is planting a computer chip in your buttocks; the next day you're perfectly willing to accept its alms. Tim, if you're the biggest political terrorist in American history, own up to it. The second reason McVeigh, if he did do it, should confess is the platform he's forsaking. He's blowing his chance to make a grand public statement of his beliefs à la Bernie Goetz, who at least admits to firing shots. A McVeigh confession would be one of the most widely reported events ever. It would be brave; braver than the person who waited until the workers at the Alfred P. Murrah Building were at their desks before he slew them and their children.

THE COURAGE OF ONE'S CONVICtions—that's why I kinda miss Pat Buchanan. I'm as repelled as anyone by Pat's social conservatism and as wary of his reflexive nationalism. But you had to love listening to a candidate with a flair for language and a genuine intellectual consistency. Abortion? He opposes it in the case of rape—a more principled position than that of so many conservatives, which classifies the destruction of the fetus as murder only when the sex that produced it is consensual. A senior Clinton official and I confessed to one another the other day that we love listening to Pat. Whenever Pat comes on C-SPAN 2 on a Saturday afternoon, the vacuum cleaner gets turned off and we tune in. He's that mesmerizing. Consider Earth Day. You know that most conservatives think of it as a goofy, liberal-wimp, commie-symp festival. But they play along because it's become a big deal. Our local conservative paper, *The Washington Times,* had a right-wing insert on Earth Day filled with odes to the planet from the likes of Newt. Buchanan has the courage to denounce the holiday entirely. "They took Easter out of the schools and gave us Earth Day," he says in his stump speeches, "so we can worship dirt."



SPEAKING OF WORSHIPING DIRT, Ted Kaczynski's saga fascinates on so many levels: the brother turning in the brother, the brief affair that went awry. (What in human history hasn't been done because of a broken heart?) One question I haven't seen explored is this: Ted Kaczynski essentially lived the way that he wanted the rest of us to live—skinning elk, stoking fires, living without the "industrial system." If he saw his life in Lincoln as the Romantic state of nature, was he happy? A Gauguin on the Continental Divide? Judging from his vacant stare and the incongruous bottle of antidepressants said to be seized from his cabin, I'd say that's doubtful. But, if he was miserable, why, then, did he want the rest of us to join him in his messianic isolation? So that we could share his misery? Or would our becoming mountain men somehow lift him out of his desolation? It's easier, perhaps, to fathom greed, avarice or the psychotic racial hatred of the *Turner Diaries* than it is the mission that guided Kaczynski—assuming, of course, he is the Unabomber. Again, the courage to confess would help us heathen understand what our Montana Moses meant for us.

HOW DO YOU HELP A KID GET OVER his or her fears? I'm single, but I think I've stumbled across a solution that I'm willing to share at no cost with parents everywhere. My girlfriend's niece is a wonderfully intriguing 4-year-old with a sense of gravity and introspection that's remarkable in someone of any age. She loves the Nutcracker and her Barbie and her parents. But, like a lot of kids, she's often fearful of new situations and, especially, of meeting new people, even with her parents by her side. She was scared of me, too; though at 5'9" I don't consider myself exactly menacing, she found me big and frightening. My solution? Whenever I'm around her I pretend to be scared of the most ridiculous things. With cartoonish exaggeration, I'll shout: "I'm scared of the TV!" I make a frightened face and run away from the TV with all the theatrics of Wile E. Coyote when he realizes that the Acme rocket strapped to his back is about to explode. This makes her laugh uncontrollably. She'll chase me and ask with a giggle, "Why are you afraid of the TV?" I stammer, "Well, what if it falls down and hits my foot?" Feeling in charge—masterful, really—she becomes the adult, reassuring me that no such thing will happen. I feign relief. And she laughs again. This exercise, repeated often enough with cans of soda, stuffed animals and other benign objects, seems to have made coping with daily fears a little easier, although her newfound bravery is, I'm sure, mostly the product of just plain growing up. There is one small problem with this shtick: my dignity has gone out the window. She's now labeled me, as she says it, "A ree-dick-ol-ous person." It's a moniker I'm willing to live with. Besides, she's not the first gal to tell me that.

ONE OF THE SHTICKS AROUND these offices is to be contrarian. Here at THE NEW REPUBLIC there's no greater *j'accuse* than ridiculing a piece as "conventional." But I'm willing to hurl that inflammatory charge at my pal Matt Miller for his piece in this issue. This pains me because I almost always agree with him. But, c'mon, we're condemned to 2 to 3 percent growth? That's the Greenspan-Rivlin-bond-market view of the world where every bit of good news about the economy triggers a panic about inflation. The dangers of inflation today are minuscule. The conditions that gave rise to the great inflations of the postwar era were caused largely by supply shortages like the oil embargo. What's more, today there's no strong labor movement to drive up wages (which are notoriously stagnant) and plenty of global competition to drive down costs. It's not "scapegoating" or supply-side fantasy to believe that we can have low inflation and big growth, just like in the '60s. The only person who should really fear that kind of growth is someone like that mountain mathematician who's afraid of prosperity and modernity altogether.

MATTHEW COOPER

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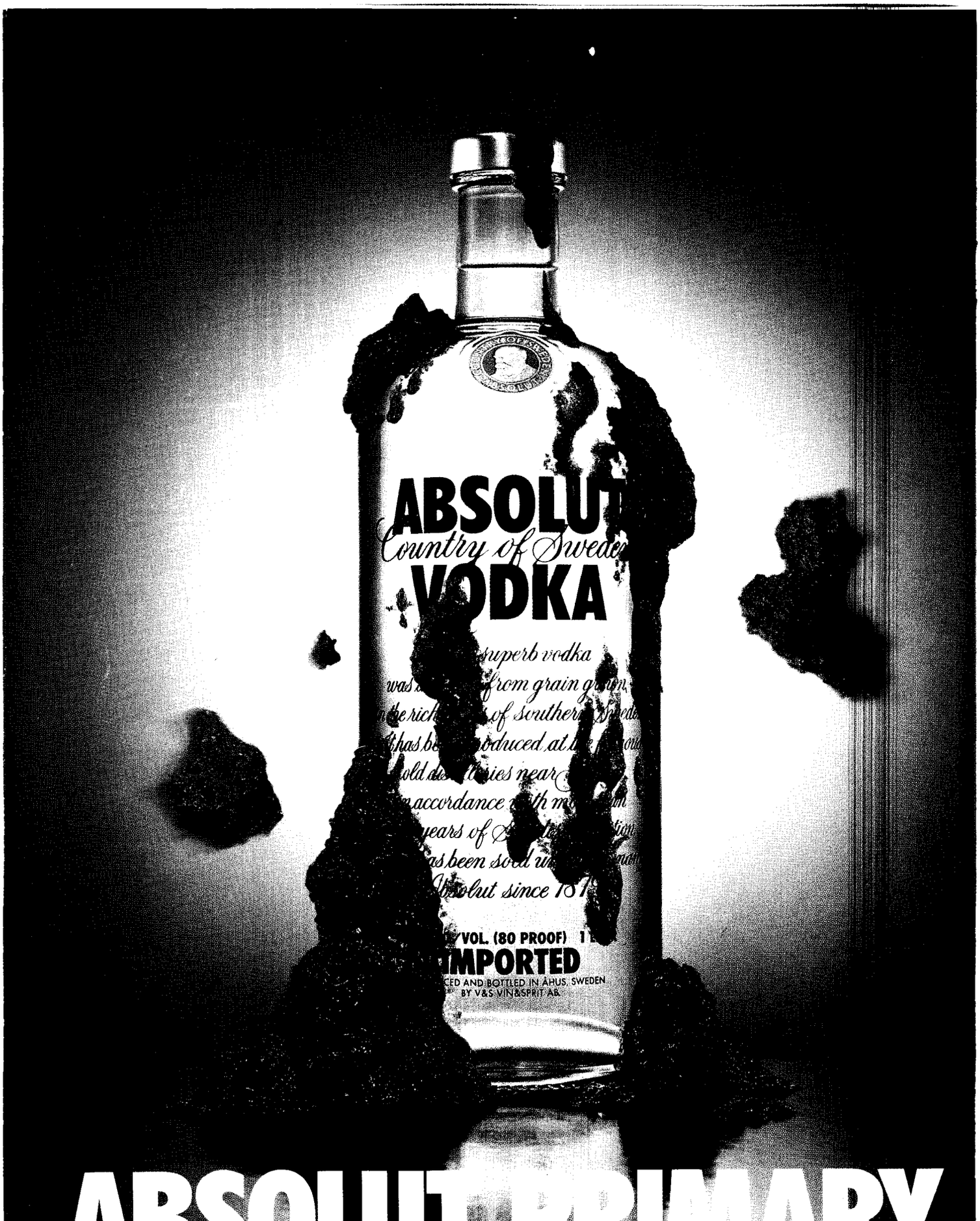

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